



Attendance Policy

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| Name of Policy | Attendance Policy |
| Date ratified | November 2024 |
| Committee Responsible for Policy | Children, Families and Community |
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| Headteacher Signature |  |
| Chair of Governors/Committee Signature |  |

Attendance Policy

At Holy Trinity C of E Primary School:

- we want our pupils to **grow** in confidence, independence, resilience and knowledge, so that all achieve their full potential and develop a life-long love of learning and of the world around us.
- we work **together** with families, community and church to model positive relationships, supporting each other and acknowledging that we are stronger when we work together.
- we are growing together as **children of God**, strengthening our faith, secure in the knowledge we are unique, loved and cherished.

I. Aims

We are committed to promoting school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation (key items are in red), which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

[The Education Acts 1996 and 2002](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

[The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Sentencing Act 2020](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)

[The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Children, Families and Community (CFC) Committee of the Governing Body have responsibility for school attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader/senior attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Izzy Rickards and can be contacted via headteacher@holytrinity.merton.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jackie Cooper and can be contacted via 020 8542 1591.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice-daily basis on SIMS, using the correct codes (Appendix I), in a timely manner.

3.6 Office staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Monitor the absence reporting via Parentmail

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the headteacher who can be contacted via 020 8542 1591 or by emailing headteacher@holytrinity.merton.sch.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am (8.30am Nursery) and ends at 3.15pm (Reception), 3.20pm (KS1), 3.25pm (KS2) and 3.30pm (Nursery).

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.15am will be marked as late (L code). Any child arriving after 9.15am, will be marked with a U code (arrived after the register had been closed).

The register for the second session will be taken straight after lunchtime has ended for each year group.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am.

Absence can be reported via the school absence line (by calling 020 8542 1591) or via Parentmail.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence persists, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence for future absences, such as a printout of medical records, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (before 9.15am) will be marked as late, using the L code
- After the register has closed (after 9.15am) will be marked as absent, using the U code

Punctuality is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on duty in the playground each day, the office staff (children who are late must enter via the main office once the gates are closed) and class teachers.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact social services or police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels where there is cause for concern. Annual attendance is reported via the end of year report.

5. Leave of Absence requests

Requesting leave of absence

The Governors of Holy Trinity C of E Primary School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.
3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

6. Other Attendance matters

6.1 Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

6.2 Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

6.3 Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

- We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. **Sickness returns:** providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

7. Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Holy Trinity Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide us with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

8. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

The headteacher will contact the family in the first instance, to arrange a meeting, and to enquire about the reasons for absence. The school works with families on an individual basis where attendance is a cause for concern. Individual incentives may be used. Attendance contracts may be used to support a return to regular attendance. These contracts are an agreement between the school, parent/carer and pupil. Other external agencies may also be involved.

10. Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher and Attendance Officer monitor attendance on a daily basis, and complete half-termly reports which are shared with Governors and the Education Welfare Officer.

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

10.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. Attendance contracts may be used to support a return to regular attendance. These contracts are an agreement between the school, parent/carer and pupil. Other external agencies may also be involved.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Belonging and Behaviour policy

Appendix

Appendix I: attendance codes

| Code | Meaning | Type |
|------|--|------------------------|
| / \ | Present at the school / morning \ afternoon | Present Mark |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework | Present Mark |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (see next page for breakdown) | Authorised Absence |
| D | Dual registered at another school - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Hospital education - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move | Present Mark |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made | Authorised Absence |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school | Unauthorised Absence |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Authorised Absence |
| Jl | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution | Authorised Absence |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning | Present Mark |
| L | Late arrival before the registers have closed | Present Mark |
| M | Attended a medical or dental appointment | Authorised Absence |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established | Unauthorised Mark |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | Unauthorised Absence |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Present Mark |
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements | Not expected to attend |
| R | Religious Observance | Authorised Absence |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. | Authorised Absence |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months. | Authorised Absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed | Unauthorised Absence |

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| V | Attending an Educational Trip or Visit | Present Mark |
| W | Attending Work Experience | Present Mark |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | Not expected to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown) | Not expected to attend |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Not expected to attend |
| # | Planned whole school closure | Not expected to attend |

| Code | Meaning | Type |
|---|--|------------------------|
| The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason: | | |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available | Not expected to attend |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Not expected to attend |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes. | Not expected to attend |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating. | Not expected to attend |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention. | Not expected to attend |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. | Not expected to attend |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent. | Not expected to attend |
| The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason: | | |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. | Authorised Absence |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. | Authorised Absence |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. | Authorised Absence |