



St Hilda's C.E. Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2022

At St Hilda's Church of England Primary School, we nurture children to become respectful British citizens and achieve their potential. Together we unite to discover, value and develop the aspirations of each individual within a trusted, caring community.

Teach me knowledge and good judgement for I trust your commands. Psalms 119:66

St Hilda's CE Primary School is committed to meeting the needs of each individual especially those identified in the 2010 Equality Act. All protected characteristics are recognised, accepted and embedded in all areas. These include: disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; homosexual, bi-sexual, trans-sexual.

Overview

At St Hilda's CE Primary School, we are committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for all pupils. It is our belief that, if pupils are to benefit from the school's educational offer in all its fullness, good attendance is essential.

This document outlines the policy for Attendance and Punctuality at St Hilda's CE Primary School. It is reviewed every three years. A copy of this document is available on our website.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all the pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Intent

As a school and in all our endeavours, we strive to:

- create a climate that encourages, promotes and supports full attendance and punctuality;
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism, applying appropriate strategies for minimizing persistent absence and employing a consistent approach across school;
- ensure maximum attendance for all pupils, actively promoting one hundred per cent attendance;
- prioritise early identification of barriers to full attendance and address these barriers as swiftly as possible;
- celebrate achievement, acknowledging and rewarding a successful record of attendance;
- place a high priority on conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- recognise, respect and build upon the vital role of families, establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance;

Implementation

- We place high priority on attendance and punctuality by making the register an event in its own right. This time is used as an opportunity for teaching staff to communicate with each child individually, sometimes calling the register in a different language. Registration begins at 9.00am and the register is closed at 9.30am.
- All staff complete the electronic register using the approved system of categorisation of absence. Any concerns about individual pupils are reported directly to the Admin Team and / or Headteacher who decide the appropriate action and monitor outcomes.
- We recognise the importance of early intervention and ask parents for written / verbal explanation of pupil absence, followed up with a parental interview, as appropriate.
- If a child is well enough to be in school, then they are expected to participate in the usual curricular activities scheduled for the day e.g. outdoor playtimes and lunchtimes, Forest School Curriculum, educational trips and visits and PE activities including swimming. In exceptional circumstances, usually with a written recommendation from a qualified medical practitioner e.g. GP, a child is encouraged to attend school but be exempt from certain physical activities e.g. whilst recovering from a fracture / non-contagious infection or where prolonged absence from school is regarded as detrimental to the individual learner.
- Attendance assemblies take place on a termly basis and a comprehensive reward system is in place to encourage sustained good attendance and punctuality:
 - certificate and pen for 100% termly attendance;
 - certificate and medal for 100% yearly attendance (1 - 3yrs);
 - individual trophies / awards for further full attendance, as appropriate;
 - weekly class attendance and punctuality announced in Collective Worship and on Facebook Page;
 - termly reward for class with highest overall attendance;
 - coverage in school newsletters and local press, as appropriate;
- If there are factors which adversely affect a pupil's attendance, the school investigates and works in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve any problems quickly and efficiently. We adopt a focussed approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance in the most expedient way possible. St Hilda's CE Primary School works with the Local Authority School Attendance Service to regularly monitor and review absences.

Monitoring Cycle

- **October (half-term)**

- Absence Analysis Report reveals pupils with attendance of less than 90%. Figure is reported to the Governing Body.
- Parents are informed that further absence would prompt investigation by School Nurse - parental consent required.

- **Autumn Term (end)**

- Termly attendance awards for 100% attenders.
- Award for class with highest overall attendance.
- Parents / carers of children with less than 90% attendance receive a letter reinforcing expectations.
- For a child with less than 90% attendance, parents / carers are asked to provide medical evidence for any further medical absences and the case is referred to LA Attendance Officer.

- **Spring (half-term)**

- Absence Analysis Report is re-run (see above) and figure is reported to the Governing Body. Names which still appear are invited for personal attendance interview with Headteacher and, where appropriate, LA Attendance Officer. Formal involvement of LA Attendance Officer for parents who do not attend the appointment.

- **Spring Term (end)**

- Termly attendance awards for 100% attenders. Award for class with highest overall attendance.
- Parents / carers of children with less than 90% attendance receive a letter reinforcing expectations. For a child with less than 90% attendance, parents / carers are asked to provide medical evidence for any further medical absences and case is referred to LA Attendance Officer.

- **Summer (half-term)**

- Absence Analysis Report is re-run (see above) and figure is reported to the Governing Body.
- Warning Letters sent out from school to all pupils with less than 95% attendance reinforcing expectations.
- For a child with less than 90% attendance, parents / carers are asked to provide medical evidence for any further medical absences.

- **Home Visits**

- Undertaken by the LA Attendance Officer when contact with family by school is not possible or has no impact.

- **Fixed Penalty Notices**

- Issued routinely for 10 or more unauthorised absences including late returns from visits abroad, unauthorised holidays etc.

- **Prosecution**

- This is done in liaison with the Local Authority Attendance Officer where an FPN has little impact on improving pupil attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

- The school records any absence as unauthorised in the following circumstances, where:
 - parents have made no contact to explain any absence by close of register at 9.30am;
 - the reason given by parents is deemed unreasonable e.g. wedding, airport visit, shopping, family party;
 - a full session (morning or afternoon) is taken for attendance at a routine medical appointment;

A regular pattern of unauthorised absences will be reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine being issued by the Local Authority.

Medical Appointments

- Where possible, routine medical appointments e.g. GP, Dentist, should be taken out of school time. If this is unavoidable, pupils should attend school immediately prior to and following an appointment. Where a child misses more than half the morning or afternoon session because of a medical appointment, this will be recorded as “unauthorised absence” in the school register.

Extended Visits (holidays during term-time)

- In September 2013, there was a revision to the law. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 No 756 states that “leave of absence during term time shall not be granted unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.”
- The Governing Body of St Hilda’s CE Primary School is advised by the Local Authority that “exceptional circumstances” are defined as:
 - ***trauma or bereavement of a close family member (which requires immediate departure from the UK);***
 - ***unique situations due to parents' work/ employment commitments which have been verified by the employer;***
 - ***an opportunity for a holiday for a terminally ill family member;***
- Planned future journeys to visit a sick relative, to visit family or to take holiday or make a religious pilgrimage such as Hajj do not fall into the above definition and will not be authorised by the school.
- An extended visit without permission and / or failure to return from an extended visit within the agreed time of a maximum of 10 school days results in absence being recorded as unauthorised. This leads to the involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer and may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of £60.00 per parent per child being imposed and the child(ren) being removed from the school roll.

- Sicknotes from abroad are not accepted as mitigating circumstances, nor are missed or cancelled flights.
- Parents requesting leave of absence in term-time should continue to contact the school in the first instance where the individual circumstances are reviewed by the Headteacher. The Headteacher may refer cases to members of the Governing Body for a final decision.

Punctuality

- Being organised and timely is a life skill; establishing good habits at an early age is effective parenting. Pupils should be ready to come through the gate and enter school at 8.50am for a prompt start to the school day. The gates are locked at 9.00am, meaning children arriving after this time must make their way into school via the main entrance. This arrival will be recorded as late.
- Frequency of late arrivals is closely monitored by the school and may be recorded as unauthorised absence. A child who attends school every day but is persistently late may not achieve full attendance

Effects of Low Attendance

- The following is an extract from the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership *Educational Neglect Policy* (June 2020).
 - *Many reports over the years have found links between neglect and poor school attendance. The Department of Education in 2012 accepted a recommendation that “persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect and that children’s social care services should work with schools to address underlying difficulties.”*
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180772/DFE-00036-2012_improving_attendance_at_school.pdf).
 - *The NSPCC in 2013 cited that “failure to ensure regular attendance that prevents the child reaching their full potential academically” as one of their six forms of neglect.*
 - *Neglect is “the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs” (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).*
 - *Educational neglect - involves a carer failing to provide a stimulating environment, show an interest in the child’s education at school, support their learning, or respond to any special needs, as well as failing to comply with state requirements regarding school attendance. (Howarth (2007)).*

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- reviewing and approving this policy in conjunction with Headteacher;
- monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation;

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring the school's legal and safeguarding obligations are met in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- reporting information about attendance and punctuality to the Governing Body;
- reviewing and approving this policy in conjunction with the Governing Body;
- ensuring that the school environment encourages, promotes, supports and celebrates full attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring how staff implement this policy to ensure approaches are applied consistently;
- analysing attendance and punctuality records in order to support children and staff;

Staff are responsible for:

- implementing this policy consistently;
- encouraging, promoting, supporting and celebrating full attendance and punctuality.
- providing a personalised approach to the specific needs of particular children;

Parents are expected to:

- support the full attendance of their child(ren) by following policy and meeting safeguarding and legal obligations in relation to attendance;
- communicate openly with the school and in a timely manner;
- bring / send their child(ren) to school on time;

Children are expected to:

- understand and celebrate the importance of good attendance and punctuality;

Ratified by the Governing Body on Monday 5th December 2022.

This policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle or sooner if required.

Next review December 2025.