Holy Trinity Catholic School: Pupil Attendance Policy

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Name: Mrs. Lorna Buchanan

Email address or contact details: head.3420@holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Mrs. Janice Flashman / Mrs. Maria Haverty

Email address or contact details: 01608 643 487 / office.3420@holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance:

Name: Natalie Medler

Email address or contact details: office.3420@holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Name: Pauline Brookes

Ratified by the Governing Body: September 2027

Review Date: September 2027

Introduction

This Attendance Policy sets out the expectations, statutory requirements, and procedures for promoting, monitoring, and securing regular attendance and punctuality at Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School. It is underpinned by statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and aligns with Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF). The policy is designed to ensure all pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum, are safeguarded effectively, and are supported to achieve their full potential through regular school attendance.

At Holy Trinity, we believe that regular attendance is essential for pupils to make the most of their educational opportunities. We are committed to working with families to ensure every child can attend school regularly and punctually.

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Aims

- To promote a whole-school culture that values and celebrates high levels of attendance and punctuality
- To ensure all pupils attend school regularly and on time, maximising their access to learning and safeguarding
- To fulfil all statutory duties relating to attendance, registration, and reporting
- To identify and address barriers to attendance, providing early intervention and support for pupils and families
- To ensure attendance procedures are inclusive, equitable, and consistently applied
- To communicate clear expectations to parents, pupils, and staff regarding attendance and punctuality
- To use attendance data strategically to inform school improvement and pupil outcomes
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Statutory Requirements

The school complies with all statutory requirements relating to attendance, including:
Education Act 1996, Section 444: Parents must ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in legal action.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended):

- Maintain accurate admission and attendance registers
- Classify absences as authorised or unauthorised in accordance with regulations
- Notify the local authority of pupils missing education or with 10+ days of unauthorised absence
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Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2022):

- Daily sharing of attendance data with the DfE
- Clear escalation procedures and partnership working with families and external agencies
- Early intervention for pupils at risk of persistent absence

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2023):

- Immediate follow-up of unexplained absences as a safeguarding priority
- Integration of attendance monitoring with safeguarding procedures

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Equality Act 2010:

- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or long-term medical needs

SEND Code of Practice (2015):

- Inclusive attendance policies and support for pupils with SEND

Children Missing Education (CME) Statutory Guidance (2016):

- Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of missing education

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:

- Accurate registers maintained for safeguarding and emergency procedures

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Headteacher	Overall responsibility for attendance strategy, policy implementation, and statutory compliance. Authorising leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Leading on legal interventions where necessary.
Attendance Officer	Daily monitoring of attendance and punctuality. Data analysis and reporting. First point of contact for families regarding attendance concerns. Liaison with external agencies (Education Welfare, Early Help). Coordinating intervention plans.
Office Staff	First-day calling for unexplained absences. Recording reasons for absence. Signing in late arrivals. Maintaining accurate registers on Arbor system. Supporting parents with attendance queries.
Class Teachers	Taking accurate registers twice daily (morning and afternoon). Promoting the importance of good attendance. Early identification of attendance concerns. Communicating concerns to Attendance Officer. Supporting pupils returning after absence.

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Role	Responsibilities
Pastoral Leaders	Supporting pupils and families with attendance barriers. Coordinating interventions and support plans. Safeguarding follow-up where attendance is a concern. Working with multi-agency partners.
SENCO	Ensuring reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. Supporting attendance plans for pupils with additional needs. Liaising with health professionals and external agencies. Ensuring inclusive practice.
Parents/Carers	Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. Notifying school on the first day of absence before 9:00am. Providing medical evidence where requested. Engaging with school support and intervention. Avoiding term-time holidays.
Pupils	Attending school regularly and on time. Understanding the importance of attendance for their learning. Communicating any concerns about attending school.
Governors	Monitoring whole-school attendance data. Holding leaders to account for attendance outcomes. Reviewing and approving attendance policy. Ensuring statutory compliance.

School Day and Registration

School Times

- **School gates open**: 8:35am
- **Registration**: 8:45am (pupils should be in class by this time)
- **Gates close**: 8:45am
- **Afternoon registration**: KS1 1:00pm KS2 1.15pm

Registration Procedures

Registers are taken twice daily using our Arbor system:

- **Morning register**: 8:45am
- **Afternoon register**: KS1 1:00pm / KS2 1.15pm

Registers close 30 minutes after the start of each session. Pupils arriving after the register closes will be marked with a 'U' code (unauthorised absence) unless there is an acceptable reason.

All attendance marks are recorded in accordance with DfE guidance (see **Appendix A: Attendance Codes**) and are legally admissible documents.

Lateness

Arriving After 8:45am

Pupils arriving after 8:45am will:

- Be marked as late ('L' code)
- Need to sign in at the school office
- Receive a late mark on their attendance record

Arriving After 9:15am (Register Closes)

Pupils arriving after 9:15am will:

- Be marked as unauthorised absence ('U' code) for that session
- Need to sign in at the school office and provide a reason for lateness
- May receive an authorised late mark if there is an acceptable reason (e.g., medical appointment with evidence)

Persistent Lateness

Persistent lateness is monitored closely. If a pupil is late 10 or more times in a term, the school will:

- Contact parents to discuss the issue
- Offer support to address barriers to punctuality
- Implement an attendance plan if lateness continues
- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer if there is no improvement
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Impact of lateness: Arriving 15 minutes late each day equates to missing two weeks of school per year.

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Reporting Absence

Parent Responsibilities

Parents must contact the school **before 9:00am on the first day of absence** by:

- Phone: 01608 643 487
- Email: office.3420@holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk
- In person at the school office

Parents should provide:

- The reason for absence
- Expected date of return
- Any relevant medical information

School Procedures

First Day Response (Safeguarding Priority):

- Office staff will attempt to contact parents by 9:30am if no reason for absence has been received
- Multiple contact methods will be used (phone, text, email)
- If no contact is made, a home visit may be conducted or emergency contacts called
- Unexplained absences are treated as a safeguarding concern in line with KCSIE 2023

Ongoing Absence:

- Parents should update the school daily for ongoing absences
- Medical evidence may be requested for absences of 3 days or more
- The Attendance Officer will monitor patterns of absence

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

Absence will be authorised when:

Illness:

- Genuine illness (medical evidence may be requested for frequent or extended absences)
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours (appointment card/letter required)
- Hospital appointments (letter required)

Exceptional Circumstances:

- Family bereavement (close family member)
- Attending a wedding or funeral of a close family member
- Emergency family situations (assessed case-by-case)
- Court appearances or legal proceedings

Other:

- Exclusion from school
- Approved educational activity or visit
- Traveller absence (in accordance with regulations)
- Exceptional leave authorised by the Headteacher

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will **not** be authorised for:

- **Holidays during term time** (except in exceptional circumstances - see below)
- Shopping trips or days out
- Birthdays or family celebrations
- Looking after siblings or other family members
- Oversleeping or general tiredness
- Non-urgent medical appointments that could be scheduled outside school hours
- Haircuts or other routine appointments
- Visiting relatives (unless exceptional circumstances)
- Absence without explanation or contact from parents

Note: The Headteacher has the final decision on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Law

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave, making it clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Requesting Leave

Parents wishing to request leave during term time must:

- Provide full details of the exceptional circumstances
- Meet with the Headteacher if requested

Important: Parents should not book any travel or make arrangements until they have received confirmation that the request has been approved.

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What Are Exceptional Circumstances?

Each request is considered individually. Examples that **may** be considered exceptional include:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Significant family emergency or bereavement
- Religious pilgrimage or ceremony that cannot take place outside term time

Holiday costs, availability, or family work patterns are NOT exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Leave and Penalty Notices

If leave is taken without authorisation, or if a request is refused and the absence still occurs:

- The absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- Under the national penalty notice framework (introduced August 2024), schools must consider issuing a penalty notice when a child has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence
- A **penalty notice** may be issued by Oxfordshire County Council
- Current penalty: **£80 per parent, per child** (if paid within 21 days) or **£160** (if paid within 28 days)
- If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160** (no reduced rate available)
- Fines are capped at **two per parent, per child** within any three-year period
- Once this limit is reached, **prosecution** may be considered
- Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments and must be paid in full
- If prosecuted, parents could face a fine of up to **£2,500**

For more information about penalty notices, please contact the school office or visit the Oxfordshire County Council website.

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Monitoring Attendance

Attendance Thresholds

We monitor attendance using the following thresholds:

Attendance %	Status	Action
96-100%	Excellent	Celebration and rewards
95-96%	Good	Monitored
90-95%	Cause for concern	Letter sent, monitoring increased, support offered
Below 90%	Persistent absence	Formal intervention, meeting with parents, attendance plan implemented

Persistent Absence: Defined as attendance below 90%. This equates to missing approximately 19 days (38 sessions) across the school year.

Data Analysis

Attendance data is:

- Monitored **daily** by the Attendance Officer
- Analysed **weekly** to identify emerging patterns
- Reviewed **half-termly** by Senior Leadership Team
- Reported to **Governors termly**
- Shared with the **DfE daily** (statutory requirement)
- Used to inform **school improvement planning**

We analyse attendance by:

- Individual pupils
- Class and year group
- Vulnerable groups (SEND, Pupil Premium, LAC, etc.)
- Absence reasons and patterns
- Impact on attainment and progress

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Intervention and Support

Early Intervention

When attendance falls below 95% or patterns of concern emerge, we follow a graduated response:

Step 1: Informal conversation

- Class teacher or Attendance Officer discusses concerns with parents
- Barriers to attendance identified
- Support offered

Step 2: Formal letter

- Letter sent outlining attendance concerns and impact on learning
- Invitation to contact school to discuss support
- Monitoring period established

Step 3: Attendance meeting

- Meeting with parents, Attendance Officer, and relevant staff
- Attendance plan developed
- Targets set and support agreed
- Review date scheduled
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Persistent Absence Intervention

When attendance falls below 90%, more formal intervention is required:

Step 1: Formal meeting with Attendance Officer / Headteacher

- Attendance plan implemented with clear targets
- Barriers addressed through multi-agency support
- Clear expectations and consequences explained
- Fortnightly monitoring

Step 2: Early Help referral

- Coordinated support from external agencies
- Family support worker involvement
- Addressing wider family needs

Step 3: Education Welfare Officer (EWO) referral

- Formal monitoring and intervention by Oxfordshire County Attendance Team
- Legal framework explained to parents
- Attendance contract may be issued

Step 4: Legal action

When a pupil has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence, the school will consider issuing a penalty notice in line with the Oxfordshire Penalty Notice Code of Practice 2024.

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Notice to Improve

- Parents will receive a formal Notice to Improve, giving 30 school days (6 weeks) to improve attendance
- During this period, the child must show significant improvement and avoid any further unauthorised absences
- If sufficient improvement is not seen, or further unauthorised absences occur, a penalty notice will be issued

Penalty Notice:

- £80 per parent, per child (if paid within 21 days)
- £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days)
- Second penalty notice within 3 years: £160 (no reduced rate)
- Maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child within 3 years

Prosecution:

- If penalty notices are not paid, or the cap of 2 notices is reached, prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996 may follow
- Court fines can be up to £2,500
- Parenting orders or Education Supervision Orders may be imposed

Support Strategies

We offer a range of support including:

Pastoral support:

- One-to-one support from pastoral team
- Mentoring programmes
- Emotional wellbeing interventions
- Transition support

Early Help:

- Coordinated multi-agency support for families
- Family support workers
- Addressing wider barriers (housing, finances, domestic issues)

SEND support:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Flexible arrangements
- Health care plans
- Specialist support

Medical needs:

- Liaison with health professionals
- Alternative provision where appropriate
- Reintegration plans following extended absence

Practical support:

- Transport assistance where this is a barrier
- Free breakfast club places for vulnerable pupils
- Flexible start times for pupils with anxiety or medical needs (time-limited and reviewed)
- Uniform support if needed

Inclusion and SEND

Holy Trinity is committed to ensuring attendance procedures are inclusive and equitable for all pupils.

Reasonable Adjustments

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice 2015, we make reasonable adjustments for pupils with:

- Disabilities
- Long-term medical conditions
- Special educational needs
- Mental health needs

Adjustments may include:

- Flexible start times or phased returns
- Reduced timetables (time-limited and regularly reviewed)
- Alternative provision or dual registration
- Personalised attendance plans
- Additional support from pastoral team or external agencies
- Adaptations to registration procedures

Medical Needs

For pupils with ongoing medical needs:

- Individual Healthcare Plans are developed in partnership with parents and health professionals
- Attendance expectations are tailored to the pupil's needs
- Regular reviews ensure plans remain appropriate
- Close liaison with medical professionals
- Support for reintegration after extended absence

SEND

The SENCO ensures:

- Attendance barriers related to SEND are identified and addressed
- Support plans include attendance targets where appropriate
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support regular attendance
- Multi-agency working addresses underlying needs

- Differentiated approaches to attendance education

We do not discriminate against any pupil group and ensure our attendance procedures promote equity and inclusion.

Oxfordshire County Attendance Team

Holy Trinity works in partnership with the Oxfordshire County Attendance Team, who can provide:

- Direct support to schools and families
- Multi-agency planning for complex cases
- Specialist support for pupils with long-term medical conditions, mental health needs, or SEND
- Advice and guidance on attendance procedures
- Administration of penalty notices and legal interventions

Contact:

- Email: attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Website: County Attendance Team | Oxfordshire Schools

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home-School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

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Appendix A: DfE Attendance Codes Reference Guide

This appendix provides a quick reference guide to the statutory attendance codes used in registers, as defined by the Department for Education.

Present at School

Code	Meaning	Statistical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late arrival before register closes	Present
B	Educated off-site (NOT dual registration)	Approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (at another educational establishment)	Approved educational activity
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity

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Unauthorised Absence

Code	Meaning	Notes
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Most common unauthorised absence code
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	Should be followed up immediately
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes)	E.g., shopping, birthdays, looking after siblings
U	Late arrival after register closes	Counts as absence for that session