HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Company No: 07696905
Registered Office: Queen's Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 1AR
Tel: 01793 527679
www.holycross.swindon.sch.uk
✉: admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk

Learn, Grow, Love, Live

Attendance Policy 2025-2026

Version	Date	Description of changes and person/organisation responsible
1.0	February 2023	Policy Updated
2.0	March 2024	Policy Updated

People Responsible:	Headteacher Governing Body
Reviewed date:	February 2025
Next review date:	February 2026

Mission Statement

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School,
we learn about ourselves and about the world.
We grow in faith,
we act with kindness, generosity and love
to ourselves and others.
We live life to the full and have a future full of hope.

This document outlines the school procedures for supporting the attendance of the children and dealing with problems of non-attendance.

The purpose of the policy is to outline the school's responsibilities with regard to attendance.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Why attendance and punctuality matters?

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance;
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.3 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by:

Morning Session:	9.00 am
Afternoon Session:	12.45pm EYFS, KS1
	1.15pm KS2

3.4 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

3.5 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 9.30am 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 one emergency contact number for their child;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day on time.

3.7. The School's Responsibilities are:

- to maximise attendance rates;
- to support parents/carers in ensuring regular and punctual attendance;
- to promote an active policy of first day contact over absence;
- to be supportive of individual parents/carers;
- to ensure parents/carers know the legal requirement in respect of attendance at school;
- to ensure parents/carers appreciate that absence from school means that their child will have missed lessons and therefore, be at a disadvantage and may fall behind the rest of the class;
- to encourage parents/carers to commit to support the school through the "home school agreement" contract;
- to keep parents/carers informed with up-to-date information in relation to attendance and government guidelines;
- to establish regular liaison meetings between the Head of School and the Education Welfare Officer;
- for the headteacher to update governors on the attendance of the children;
- to clearly identify authorised and unauthorised attendance.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon. It will mark 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.
The register for the morning session will be scheduled as follows:

Morning Session Register:	8.50 am

The register for the afternoon session will be scheduled as follows:

Afternoon Session EYFS and KS1:	12.45pm
Afternoon Session KS2:	1.15pm

Any child reporting for school after that time will be deemed to be 'Late for Registration'. This will be recorded as such by the office staff. Any notified absence should be recorded in the appropriate manner.

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 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin office staff (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should not withdraw their children from school for holidays during term time.

Term time absence must be applied for using the school's Term Time Absence application form which is available from the School Office. No term time holiday will be authorised for children except in exceptional circumstances and may result in Referrals to the Education Welfare Officer and Fixed Penalty Notices being issued.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, 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.

Term time absence must be applied for using the school's Term Time Absence application form which is available from the School Office.

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

The headteacher monitors lateness of pupils, as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class.

It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The gates open at 8.35 am for all year groups and close at 8.50am so there is a window of 15 minutes where the children can come into school.

The school day starts after the gates close at 8.45am for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school (L code). The afternoon begins at 12.45 pm for Reception and Key Stage One, and 1.15 pm for Key Stage 2. Pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 12.55 pm and 1.20 pm respectively.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the headteacher will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality.

If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life**.**

Schools have a responsibility to secure good attendance and to involve external agencies if poor attendance occurs.

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 pass the details on to EWO/CME Officer;
- 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.

After a **maximum of 10 days** of non-school attendance and after school has been unable to contact parents/ carers, the school should complete the actions below and then pass the CME Officer/EWO. The School will try and locate the child by carrying out a series of checks. If a member of staff has a safeguarding concern they must contact the School DSL who may make a referral to Swindon MASH.

Following failure to locate the child or young person after initial enquiries the school must:

- discuss the case with their local EWO/CME Officer and start to complete the CME checklist and then pass to the school EWO/CME Officer who will make additional enquiries (if suspicious circumstances/very sudden etc. Schools should notify the Swindon MASH 01793 466903 and follow the Child Protection Procedures);

- comply with Department of Education regulations and the borough's children missing education procedure when removing a pupil from school roll until the EWO/CME Officer have completed enquiries and advised the school;

- use CME form on Synergy when a child is no longer a pupil at the school and has not started in a new school. Any immediate concerns for a child, contact the MASH via 01793 445500.

4.6. Absence from School due to temporary incapacity

It is at the headteacher's discretion not to allow children suffering from temporary incapacity i.e. broken legs/damaged ligaments or muscles (that would impede mobility) to attend school while they are unable to function independently i.e. without crutches or other external supports.

The school does not have the necessary support staff to be able to afford individual attention to the health, safety and well-being of these children. Such children may be supported by the hospital school.

4.7. Truancy

If staff do suspect that a child is truanting from school they should contact the headteacher immediately.

If staff suspect that a child is being kept at home unnecessarily, they should also inform the headteacher.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if they fall to levels that are of concern to the school.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Headteachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are **exceptiona**l circumstances relating to the application.

Requests to visit family members living in another country are **not** classed as exceptional circumstances.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

At the time this policy was produced, the Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days; thereafter the fine doubles to £160 if paid within 28 days. A fine is issued to each parent for each child, for example, if a child has two parents (including step-parents or partners) - 2 x 80 = £160. If a parent/carer does not pay within the specified time limits the LA will prosecute for the offence of irregular attendance under s444 Education Act 1996.

Where there are concerns about unauthorised absence, parents/carers will be informed of their legal obligations by letter and of the very real possibility that extended absence could lead to their child's name being removed from the register. The school will adhere to LA procedures in respect of the procedures leading to a child's name being removed from the register. The place would then be offered to another child. Re-entry would be subject to a place being available in line with the Admissions Policy.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice has previously been issued for unauthorised absence any further unauthorised absences could lead to prosecution through the magistrate's court.

5.2. Strategies for promoting attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: a place where our core values drive great teaching and learning. Pupils experience a rich and broad educational curriculum which includes a range of opportunities to enhance learning and live life to the full - including exposure to music, the countryside, art, sports, charitable works and fundraising for others.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make parents and pupils aware of the importance of good attendance.

We expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and we make sure that parents and pupils understand its importance.

We convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes via parents' meetings, the school website and reminders being placed regularly in the school's newsletters.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and attendance is discussed at Parents' Evenings. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1. Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level;
- log conversations with parents on CPOMS/SIMS about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support;
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

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.

6.2 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;
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

6.3 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;
- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum:

- at every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board;
- targets within the policy will be reviewed by the Governors annually.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online/ E–Safety policy

9. Further Information

Swindon Borough Council

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools_and_education/1275/school_attendance

https://hubforeducation.swindon.gov.uk/Page/20849

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

DFE Attendance and absence codes (applies from 19th August 2024)

Code	Reason	Notes
	Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school	No change
/	Morning session	No change
\	Afternoon session	No change
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Change in details
	Attending a place other than the school	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	New reason/code
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Change in details
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Change in details
W	Attending work experience	Change in details
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Change in details
D	Dual registered at another school	Change in details
	Absent - leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Previously C code
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	No change
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Previously J code
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	No change
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	No change
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Previously C code
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	No Change
	Absent - other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Change in details
R	Religious observance	No change
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Change in details
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Change in details
	Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	New reason/code
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Previously Y code
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Previously Y code
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	New reason/code
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Previously Y code
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Previously Y code
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	New reason/code
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Previously Y code
	Absent - unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school	No change
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Change in details
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Change in details
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	No change
	Administrative codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Change in details
#	Planned whole school closure	Change in details
	Please note **H** code (holiday) can no longer be used.	

Version 2.0 September 2024

SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL