



# THE HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY COMPANY

Schools: St. Anne's Catholic Primary School, St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School, St. Francis Catholic Primary School, Our Lady & St. Joseph Catholic Academy, St. Thomas More School and Sixth Form College.

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Ratified at Directors Meeting on:.....

Signed ...Jim Crawford.....Chair of Directors

Date.....

To be reviewed annually in the Spring term.

## 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require all schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## 3. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Absence will be categorised as follows: Illness

In most cases a telephone call from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

### Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

### Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement. We request that parents give notice to the school by completing a request for authorised absence form.

### Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/senior teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### Family Holidays and Extended Leave

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company has agreed that to ensure consistency in this process along with government guidelines, all requests for holiday during school time will be refused. In such instances, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice, a fine or a summons to court issued by the Local Authority.

### Religious Observance

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent by completing a request for authorised absence form. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of

the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### Medical Conditions

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company automatically treats illness as authorised absence and with the local authorities' help, support pupils' education throughout their illnesses. We also have an understanding and sensitive approach to children who may have periods of absence due to disability or long-term ill health. Please contact our inclusion manager if you wish to discuss your child's attendance and punctuality in this context and allowances will be made. Further information on the statutory duty for school and local authorities to provide this support is available in "Access to Education for children and young people with Medical needs" (DfES 0732/2001)

### Late Arrival

Lower school registration begins at 9.05 am, pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.45 am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Lower school registration begins at 9.10am, pupils arriving after 9.10 am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.45 am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Pupils arriving late must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

#### Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken during term time (The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company has agreed that all such requests are to be refused to ensure consistency along government guidelines)

#### **4. Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and preferably before 9.15 am on 02476383807 or by e-mail on [admin3584@welearn365.com](mailto:admin3584@welearn365.com). Alternatively, call into the school office and report the absence in person.

If your child is absent the school Admin Officer will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with Senior Teachers if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Team (ACE) if attendance moves below 95%.

#### **5. ACE**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school will discuss the absence with the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Team.

As it is the role of ACE to support the school with individuals who are having difficulties with attendance or punctuality, together we will decide on what appropriate action should be taken e.g. meeting in school, phone call, letter or referral. ACE will then be involved with monitoring the situation with the school until attendance or time keeping improves or the decision is taken for further action to be undertaken by the Local Authority. This includes Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders in the Family Proceedings Court or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

## 6. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.05am for lower school and 9.10am for upper school. We expect our children to be in the playground before this time so that they are sitting at their desks ready to start the school day at 9.05am and 9.10 am.

Punctuality also applies to parents picking up children at the end of the day. The end of the school day is 3.20pm for lower school and 3.30pm for upper school.

If a child is not collected within a reasonable timescale and we cannot contact the parents/carers then Social Services may be contacted.

Registers are marked at **9.10 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At **9.45 am**, the registers will be closed in the school office. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Senior Management Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

## 7. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Admin Team and the Head teacher and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance and punctuality data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. These will be monitored and evaluated by the school's Academy Committee.

We will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 8. Support Systems

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make us aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs and looked after children. Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils

## **9. Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- Twenty days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company will follow Warwickshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

### The Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Review the schools' Attendance Policies within the Multi Academy Company and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of each school's Academy Committee to lead on attendance matters.
- Monitor each school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Academy Committee and Board of Director's meetings when required.
- Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff to lead on attendance in each school.

### The School will:

- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all children to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor attendance effectively and follow up absence appropriately.
- Raise awareness of regular school attendance by highlighting expectations in newsletters, the school prospectus, assemblies and parent's meetings.
- Encourage a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Discuss strategies with pupils and parents to support those with attendance difficulties.

Parents have a very important role to play in supporting their children's education. Ultimately all those with parental responsibility are accountable for the regular and punctual attendance of the children in their care.

### Parents should:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment. Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school by 9.15 am if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties and inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Local Authority will consider the use of legal sanction

**Attendance Policy Extract:**

***Leave of Absence***

The Government have 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

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- 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 Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers 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.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**