



# Holy Family Catholic School & Sixth Form

**Headteacher:** Dr. A. Stone BA Hons (Cantab) NPQH



## **Attendance and Punctuality information** **for Parents and Carer's of statutory age** **children.**

### **The Duty of the law**

Education of children is a statute (commonly called a law) as primary legislation by national government. The responsibility of upholding the Education Act 1996 (2002, 2011) for school aged children (5-16) has a three way split.

- The Local Authority must ensure they promote high standards at the schools within their borough. To monitor all local authority maintained school. To ensure they are providing an established provision to their local community.
- The school has the responsibility to provide the following;
  - A place of education to all children on roll
  - To ensure they follow national guidelines and the national curriculum
  - To give each child equal opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Finally, it is you the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly (above 95%) and arrives at school on time everyday ready to be educated.

**It is a parent's/carer's duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to ensure their child attends school regularly. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent/carer is guilty of an offence. All prosecutions could lead to a conviction and a fine of up to £2500 or a prison sentence.**

## Attendance

- All children are expected to maintain an attendance above 95% taking illness and other circumstances into account.
- Any child's attendance under this percentage would be investigated for the causes by the designated Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.
- Any child who has under 90% attendance is considered a 'persistent absentee' and would be subject to a referral to the BACME (Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education Service).
- All reasons for absences should be reported to school and evidence provided (medical). Medical evidence such as labelled medication, GP/Hospital letters and GP/Hospital appointment cards are accepted.

## Punctuality

Lateness not only disrupts your child's learning but also the learning of everyone else in the class, as disrupting the lesson makes it difficult for all the children to settle. Your child being late will also put them at a disadvantage if they have missed their teacher's instructions to complete an activity.

There is a legal requirement to ensure your child attends school on time and failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken against you.

- School starts promptly at 8.40am
- All children are expected to attend school on time everyday
- Any reason for lateness will only be excused for a valid verified reason
- Any child identified to have an emerging pattern of lateness parent's/carer's will be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss
- Any child arriving more than half an hour later than the school's start time would receive an unauthorised late mark and be classified as being absent in the morning.

## Term Time Leave

Amendments to [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the previous statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear 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 to be granted.

While absence may not be granted for leave during term time, it is entirely the school's decision and is not a parental right. **Failing to adhere to this could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 leading up to £120** if not paid within 28 days from the issue date.

## **Permission to travel abroad during term time**

The same rules and procedures apply as above for when permission is being sought for children to travel abroad during term time.

Additional information will be requested from parents/carer's to enable us as a school to ensure the safety of our pupils. Parent/carer's may be asked to complete a term time leave form and provide information such as flight confirmation details (departure and arrival).

## **Medical absence**

Pupils are not expected to attend school when they are not well enough to do so whether as a result of short term, long term or recurring illnesses.

However, they should **not** be kept away from school when they are well enough to go to lessons or when they have minor ailments, such as coughs, colds and runny noses or whilst prescribed antibiotics.

These minor ailments do not always prevent them from taking part in their education. A useful rule of thumb is whether the ailment would keep parents/carers and teachers away from work.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

Absence is regarded as unauthorised if:

- If a child is absent from school and no contact is made by the parent/carer
- If a child is absent from school and is fit and well to attend.
- The parent knows that a child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause the child to do so.

## **Schools duty**

At Holy Family we have a duty to investigate all instances of punctuality and attendance issues before we refer matters on to the Local Authority. Our investigation procedures include, telephone calls, text messages and letters home informing you of your child's attendance and punctuality concerns.

If no improvement is seen, parent/carer's will be invited into school for a 'School Attendance Panel meeting' sometimes chaired by a Local Authority representative. Within this meeting, a clear plan will be devised in order for your child's attendance to improve and continue to be monitored over a period of time. A school attendance agreement terms will also be jointly completed by the school, pupil and parent/carer, which is then signed.

In some cases, we carry out home visits or welfare checks if there are other difficulties hindering the child from attending school.

We strive as a school to put in as much support as possible to work in collaboration with parent/carer's to support their children's learning. We encourage school meetings and regular phone contact to ensure this.

As a very last resort families will be referred to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Officer for further action to be taken in cases of persistent absence and punctuality.

### **Legal Process**

- A school will be required to carry out a number of actions to address a child's non attendance before requesting the intensive support of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- EWO will work with the family to improve attendance, through assessment and planning.
- If poor attendance is not resolved, the local authority will then proceed to present the case for prosecution.
- Parent can obtain a legal representative to be involved
- **If found guilty, the parent(s)/carer(s) would receive a criminal conviction, this could affect their present employment or any future employment. They could also receive a parenting order which could involve imposing a curfew that would be monitored via electronic tag. Parent(s)/carer(s) could receive up to a three months custodial sentence and £2500 fine.**

Please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. If you are experiencing difficulty encouraging your child to attend school, please make contact with your child's Year Leader or a member of the Safeguarding/Learning Mentor Team who can provide you with additional support.