



HOLY TRINITY C. of E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Holy Trinity C.E. (A) Primary School believes that regular attendance is important for pupils to take full advantage of the educational provision made available to them. Irregular attendance is likely to place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a school, therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of regular pupil attendance. In this matter the partnership between school and home is important. School aims to develop children to their full potential; parents have a responsibility to aid the education progress by ensuring that children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a suitable condition to learn. We expect our parents to value school and their children's education and to support our school's rules.

School Attendance

Advice on the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Relevant attendance legislation (www.legislation.gov.uk) is contained in

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education Pupil Registration Regulations introduced a further requirement that

attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Manuscript registers must be kept in ink and corrections made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly indistinguishable (i.e. definitely no “tip-ex”).

Hartlepool Local Education Authority requires all teachers to use the symbols shown in *Appendix 1* for the marking of registers.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in school will have an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are complete by 9.00 a.m. and 12.50 pm KS2, 12.55 p.m. KS1, when they will be returned to the school office. Registers must not be taken to the office until 9.00 a.m.

It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after 8.55 a.m. Children arriving after 8.55 a.m. but before 9.30 a.m. will receive a late mark. After that it will be recorded as unauthorised unless the explanation corresponds with the new attendance codes.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

Parents will be informed in writing if their child is marked late on more than one occasion, during a register check period, in line with school policy.

Absence

It is the parent’s responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child’s absence. School should be contacted by telephone, email or personal contact and informed of the reason for the child’s absence as soon as possible and no later than 10 a.m. on the first morning of absence. If the school has not been contacted at 10 a.m. the administrator will try to contact the parent to ascertain the reason for absence. Failure to ascertain the reason for absence may result in a referral to the school’s attendance officer. We also need to receive information when the child returns to school, this will be in the form of a letter which must detail the dates of absence and be dated and signed. If the letter is not dated the teacher will date the letter when it is received.

It is a fact that parentally-condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

An excessive amount of unauthorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of unauthorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 provides that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the teacher from the child's parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, School or our Attendance Officer can refer the matter to a doctor working in the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make contact with the pupil's GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the Attendance Team and/or the School Health Service.

Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given on production of an appointment card.

The class teacher will keep all notes and notes of telephone messages and a note of any verbal explanations, dated, in their absence file situated at the back of the register.

If a note is not forthcoming after three school days a letter will be sent. (*Appendix 2*). A supply of this letter is to be held by each class teacher).

Reported absences can be

referred to the Attendance Officer. if:

- the absence is regular/repeated and, therefore, affecting the child's education.
- there is cause for concern that the child is at risk.

Holidays

As from 1st September 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations completely remove any references to family holidays and extended leave, as well as the 10 day threshold. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers should not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such cases Headteachers will determine the number of school days that a child can be away from school. Requests must be made in writing to school as soon as possible, detailing dates and reasons.

This will mean that we will not be able to grant holiday requests during term time from 1st September 2013 onwards and holidays taken during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absences. We have sought clarification on what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' and this does not include instances where work place holiday availability/rotas, etc. dictate that holiday dates are tied to certain weeks of the year which may unfortunately coincide with term time dates when children would be in school.

These amendments and regulations are prescribed at a national level and were applied to all schools from 1st September 2013.

Regulations set in 2007 enable all schools to issue penalty notices to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. These regulations have been amended to reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice imposed of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. The school follows the LA guidance for term time. Regular attendance is 90% or above. See Appendix 3.

Appointments

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly the school must note the presence of a pupil (again for the purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. The signing in / out book in the main office will hold information on the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.

Categorising Absence

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences. The L.A. Attendance Policy Document is available from the Head Teacher. This document gives a lot more relevant details of the various categories of absence. However the document does state the following key points which we must always bear in mind:-

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school;
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems the aim should always be to expect regular attendance;
- Lateness should be actively discouraged;
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) and none of the reasons apply, the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly;
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered;
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence;
- Parents should be aware that family holiday requests will not be granted during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Even where absence is authorised, schools should be alerted to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
- In promoting regular attendance, schools should work closely with appropriate education department staff.

Lateness

It is Holy Trinity C of E (A) Primary School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of lateness.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the main office where they will be signed in.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances enquiries may reveal that the late arrival

stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances, in such case discussions can be held with the Attendance Officer so that support can be offered to the family via the local authority. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to seek an early meeting with parents whilst keeping the Attendance Co-ordinator informed. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the Attendance Co-ordinator will consult with the Local Authority's Attendance Officer.

Role of Attendance Officer

The role of our designated Attendance Officer is to:

- Liaise, where appropriate, between home and school;
- Investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
- Complete a regular register check;
- Work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality: preparing to transfer to secondary school

Register Checks

The school has a legal obligation to inform parents, in writing:

- if their child absence is reported as below 90% during a register check
- if their child is reported as being late on more than one occasion during the register check period.

School and the attendance officer will assess each situation at each register check and decide whether to move onto formal monitoring procedures. The Attendance Officer and School will continue to monitor lateness and absence below 90%.

Referral to the Attendance Officer

Referral to the Attendance Officer will be made in the following circumstances:

- The absence is regular and/or repeated and therefore affecting the child's education;
- When a pupil has been absent for two consecutive weeks and the absence has been unauthorised;
- The intervention by the school has failed to secure a pupil's regular attendance.
- Persistent lateness.
- Request for holidays when pupils' attendance is below 90%.

Referrals can only be made through the Head Teacher. A referral form will be completed for each pupil and given to the Attendance Officer.

Progress reports on referrals will be given to the school at regular intervals by the Attendance Officer (as agreed between the school and the Attendance Officer).

Details of the procedures followed by the Attendance Team may be found in the L.A's Attendance Procedures Document.

When making a referral to your school's Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

- Action taken to date by the school;
- Parents/pupils attitudes towards school and the school's intervention;
- Parental reasons for non-attendance;
- Action taken by school to resolve any identified problems;
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school;
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

Although the main areas of activity for the Attendance Team relate to enforcing school attendance, they do provide additional support in working with pupils and families.

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at Holy Trinity C of E (A) Primary School.

This will take the form of certificates and small prizes at the end of each term for 100% attendance.

The LA award prizes for attendance to pupils who achieve 100% attendance each year.

Appendix 1

Attendance symbols

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (note medical/dental apt)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental apt
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

Appendix 2

Letter

Dear Parent of

Date

ATTENDANCE

Could you please confirm in writing why your child was absent from school on

.....

in order that we can put the appropriate mark in the register.

If however this was a medical appointment it will be necessary to provide the appointment card.

Please return this information within the next 7 days.

Failure to provide the above will result in an unauthorised absence.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

PUPIL'S NAMEClass

Reason for absence on

.....

.....

Parent's signature Date

Appendix 3

LA Guidance – Authorising Holidays in Term time

Family Holiday Requests during Term Time

The head teacher can only grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in exceptional circumstances. However, each application will be considered individually taking into account factors such as the timing of the holiday and the pupil's attendance (see Holiday Authorisation Calculator Appendix A).

In brief this means that:

- Parents **CANNOT** demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Parental requests **MUST** be in writing. •
- All requests **MUST** be considered on their own merits.
- Leave of absence for a family holiday will be granted **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances.
- The power to authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence belongs to the head teacher.

In order to ensure equity within and between schools, decisions on whether or not to authorise a leave of absence for family holidays will be guided by the use of the Holiday Authorisation Calculator (A). This does not remove the head teacher's prerogative to authorise a holiday.

Procedure

Parent/carer should complete a holiday request form and submit this to the school at least four weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within one week. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support should be offered to the parent/carer.

The Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (A) should be used to guide the head teacher's decision on whether or not to authorise the requested leave of absence.

- If the total score is 7 or less and there are exceptional circumstances the holiday leave may be authorised.
- If the total score is 8 or more holiday leave should not be authorised if there are no exceptional circumstances.
- If a pupil has already taken one period of holiday absence in the same academic year further holiday leave should not be authorised.
- If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings (i.e. has sent an Advisory letter) holiday should not be authorised and this should be recorded on the form.
- Parents should be made aware (perhaps in the school newsletter or prospectus) that holidays which have not been agreed in advance will lead to the pupil being

marked with unauthorised absences and that this may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

A letter confirming that the request has been authorised/denied (B/C) should be sent to the parent/carer, with a copy of the Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (A) within one week of receipt of the holiday request.

- Pupil should be marked H (authorised absence) for the agreed period of holiday leave.
- Pupil should be marked G (unauthorised absence) in the register if the holiday absences have **NOT** been authorised by the school or for days taken in excess of an agreed period.

Family Holidays and Extended Trips Overseas

Sometimes parents may wish to take their children on extended overseas holidays during term-time. Such visits are particularly important to parents who want to ensure that their children meet members of their extended family overseas. While it is important to recognise the educational and cultural significance of such visits, DfE guidelines make clear that leave of absence for more than two weeks during term-time should not be authorised unless regarded as **exceptional** and "blanket approval" policies are not acceptable. It is expected that parents will put forward a convincing case to justify such absence. When considering a request for extended leave during term time the following factors may be relevant, in addition to those on the Holiday Calculator, but this list should not be regarded as comprehensive:

- ✓ the nature and purpose of the trip;
- ✓ the duration of the trip and its impact on the child's education, particularly in terms of the continuity of learning;
- ✓ the circumstances of the family, the wishes of the parents and their cultural traditions;
- ✓ the distance to be travelled and the expense involved;
- ✓ The overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

Where holidays of more than two weeks are planned, to visit family members living overseas, schools may find it helpful to discuss with parents the most appropriate time of year and point in the pupil's educational career for the visit, so that it can be timed to minimise the effects on the continuity of the pupil's education. In cases where approval is given for such a holiday, schools may wish to consider making up a study pack or setting assignments for the pupil concerned to complete while s/he is away.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to

sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register. The implications of this and the difficulties of admission to oversubscribed groups should be made clear to the family.

It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents' perspective even though they may not be able to comply with a request for absence. In discussing absence with parents (whether before or after the event) schools should show that they have taken account of the following:-

- ✓ a visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance to that of the normal associations with a 'holiday'.
- ✓ visits may be very important in terms of the pupil's identity and self-esteem as they grow up.
- ✓ parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweighs the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school -maintaining family links (in extended family situations) may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some societies than it does currently in many western societies.
- ✓ the reasons for parents making a visit may be similar to those for indigenous parent's e.g. family illness, bereavement, family business, maintaining family contacts etc.

If absence is agreed the school should:

- ✓ confirm agreement in writing (letter B).
- ✓ seek to establish, and make explicit if appropriate, the potential educational value of the visit.
- ✓ explain what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return if necessary, and how the parents could help the child
- ✓ enquire whether work can be given for the child to do (with parental support) while s/he is away
- ✓ go through any work that has been done by the pupil on return
- ✓ inform parent/carer of the possibility of the pupil's removal from the school roll if the pupil does not return within ten days of the agreed date and no reasonable explanation is forthcoming.

Registration Marks

H = Holiday leave is authorised (authorised absence).

G = Holiday leave is not authorised (unauthorised absence). This mark should be used for holiday absences that have **NOT** been authorised by the school or for days taken in excess of an agreed period.

- All requests for holiday leave should be submitted at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the holiday period requested.
- if request is for an extended period (i.e. three weeks or more) parents/carers will be invited in to school to discuss the request.

-

Appendix

A - Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart

- This should be completed by a senior member of staff.
- 'Mitigation' may be identified by the 'Reason for term time holiday request' on the parental request form, or there may be other information available to the school that impacts on the decision.
- Score is 1 to 6 holidays may be approved.
- Score is 7 or more holidays should not be authorised except at the discretion of head teacher for exceptional circumstances.

B - Standard Letter – Holiday Leave Approved

- Parents/carers should receive a response to their request within one week of the application.
- Letter should be accompanied by a copy of the completed Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B).

C - Standard Letter – Holiday Leave Denied

- Parents/carers should receive a response to their request within one week of the application.
- Letter should be accompanied by a copy of the completed Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B).
- This letter may also be used if denying authorisation for extended holiday leave.

D - Standard Letter – Extended Holiday Leave Approved

- Letter sent confirming discussion held with the parent/carer.
- Arrange study pack/work project.

If request for extended leave is denied use letter D and expand on reasons.

Appendix A

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR PARENTAL HOLIDAY

A Head teacher can only authorise holidays in exceptional circumstances.

Full name of child(ren)
Address
Reason for application and dates
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s).....
Date

Office use only	
Request seen by Head Teacher/Head of Year Y/N	
Agreement reached Y/N	Current Att % <input type="text"/>
Other outcome	Date / /

The head teacher will consider the following points before authorising leave

1. Is the reason for the request exceptional circumstances
Service Personnel.
Restriction on time of leave from employer.
Crisis where the family need to spend time together.
2. The child's previous attendance history.
3. Holiday requests within the current academic year.

Name of school **School Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart**

Name of Pupil.....

The merits of each individual request should be evaluated by providing answers to ALL the following questions and scoring accordingly.

Points Possible		Points
When is the holiday planned for?	September = 2pts May –June = 2pts Other dates = 1pt	
Pupil’s attendance level is? (Up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year.)	Less than 89.99% = 6pts 90% to 91.99% = 5pts 92% to 93.99% = 4pts 94% to 95.99% = 3pts More than 96% = 2pt	
How close is the pupil to a SATs assessment or other examination?	Non-SATs/Exam Year = 1pt More than 11 wks = 1pt 5 – 10 weeks = 2pts 2 – 5 weeks = 3pts less than 2 weeks = 4pts	
		Subtotal
Any exceptional circumstances		Subtract 3 points from subtotal.
Details of exceptional circumstances		
		Total
<p>Leave for family holiday where the total is 8 or more the holiday <u>should NOT be authorised</u> The only exception to the above may be where there are, in the opinion of the head teacher ‘exceptional circumstances.’ (incl. religious and cultural considerations; add comment in the exceptional circumstances box). If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings holiday should NOT be authorised. DELETE WHERE APPROPRIATE:- REQUEST APPROVED / REQUEST DENIED</p>		
Completed by..... Date.....		

Appendix B

..... School

Dear

Thank you for your recent holiday request form.

I am able to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date*, for the purpose of a family holiday.

Requests for holiday leave are never taken lightly and in taking this decision I have considered *name of pupil*. the reason for the request, overall level of attendance, academic attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests (see attached form).

Please contact me to discuss a possible study pack or project outline that *child's name* can complete whilst away.

Yours sincerely,
Headteacher

Appendix C

.....School

Dear

Thank you for your recent holiday request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date*, for the purpose of a family holiday.

I have no wish to deprive families of a well earned family holiday but my first concern has to be the educational development of *pupil name*. Requests for holiday leave are never taken lightly and in taking this decision I have considered name of pupil the reason for the request, overall level of attendance, academic attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests (please see attached form).

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed holiday, *pupil name* absences will be marked as unauthorised. I should inform you that unauthorised absences will be referred to the Local Authority who may under certain circumstance consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice or other legal action in relation to unauthorised absences.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,
Headteacher

Appendix D

.....School

Dear

Further to our meeting on *date*.

I am able to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's extended leave of absence from *date* to *date*.

Requests for extended holiday leave are only ever granted in exceptional circumstances.

Outline reason for authorisation.

Please contact me to discuss a possible study pack or project outline that *child's name* can complete whilst away.

I look forward to *name of pupil* returning on *date* and hope that *name of pupil* finds it an interesting and stimulating experience.

I must remind you that if *name of pupil* does not return to school within ten school days of the agreed date, without reasonable cause, *name of pupil* may be removed from the school roll.

Yours sincerely,
Headteacher