



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of issue:	September 2023
Review Date	September 2024
To be reviewed	Headteacher and Governors
Authorised by	Headteacher and Governors

1. Introduction

Regular attendance is crucial in raising educational standards and in ensuring that every child meets his or her full potential at Holy Trinity Church of England Academy. There is compelling and irrefutable evidence which suggests that children with poor attendance tend to fall behind their peers and under-achieve.

In view of the above, we are committed to maximising attendance for all pupils. This policy gives a detailed overview of the way in which attendance will be recorded and monitored and sets out what is expected from school staff, parents/carers, governors and pupils of Holy Trinity Church of England Academy.

This policy has been produced in collaboration with the Calne Area Heads group.

1A. The Legal Framework

For Parents:

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents/carers this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted.

For Holy Trinity Church of England Academy:

By law, schools are required to take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon and to report to Wiltshire Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for ten consecutive school days or more without known reason.

2. Key Principles

We will approach attendance issues taking into account the following key principles:

- i. Ensuring good attendance at Holy Trinity Church of England Academy is the responsibility of everyone in the school community including: parents and carers; school staff; governors and pupils.
- ii. The default position is that every pupil should be at school whenever we are open. Any instance of a pupil missing any school time should be regarded as wholly exceptional.
- iii. We will keep an accurate register of attendance and will monitor attendance figures.
- iv. Staff and pupils alike will be made aware of the registration process.
- v. Non-attendance will be identified. Efforts will be made to identify the reasons for it and to return the pupil in question to school as soon as possible;

- vi. We recognise that there may be many different reasons why a pupil may be absent from school. We will always approach issues of attendance sensitively, particularly in regard to our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. We will at all times do our utmost to ensure that all pupils feel appropriately supported and valued.
- vii. We will put in place procedures for returning absentees to catch up on missed learning without disrupting the learning of other pupils.
- viii. Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated and reviewed by us. This attendance policy will be shared with all stakeholders.
- ix. Parents/carers will be made aware of and expected to comply with their legal duties.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

As stated above, ensuring good attendance at Holy Trinity Church of England Academy is the responsibility of everyone in the community including: pupils; parents and carers; staff and governors.

The Headteacher is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school - head@holytrinitycalne.wilts.sch.uk

The school recently appointed a Parent Support Lead, who will be taking up the post in the first week of October 2023 - khorner@holytrinitycalne.wilts.sch.uk

Holy Trinity Church of England Academy staff will be expected to:

- Follow the procedures in this policy and encourage parents and pupils to reduce absences so that every pupil has access to full-time education;
- Register and monitor attendance in accordance with procedures set out below;
- Act early to address patterns of absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example;
- Convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality;
- Promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents/carers;
- Respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently;
- Offer prompt support to pupils who experience difficulties.

Parents/Carers will be expected to:

- Comply with their legal duty to ensure that a child registered at the school attends regularly;
- Ensure that children attend punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn;
- Ensure that children are only absent in cases of genuine illness or other emergency;
- In the event that a child is prevented from attending, notify the school as soon as possible;
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education;
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance;
- Parents and carers need to contact the school office on 01249 812424, email absence@holytrinitycalne.wilts.sch.uk or absence can also be sent via the webform on the front page of our school website.

- Follow the leave of absence procedures set out below.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend the school and lessons regularly and punctually;
- Take the information home to their parents/carers about their attendance.

Governors will be expected to:

- Monitor attendance figures;
- Review the school's policy and performance as far as attendance goes.

4. Registration and Absence

4.1 By law, schools and Academies are required to record in the attendance register - once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the afternoon - whether pupils are present, absent, engaged in an approved, supervised educational activity off-site, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. We will comply with this by adopting the procedure set out below.

- Registers will be called promptly at 9am and at 1.15pm.
- The morning register will close at 9.30am.
- If a pupil arrives late, and the register is still open, they will be marked late but present.
- Consequently, if a pupil arrives after 9.30am they will be marked 'U' (late and arrived after the register closed).
- If a pupil arrives after 9.30am, with evidence of a medical/dental appointment they will be marked 'M' (medical).
- The afternoon register closes at 1.45pm.
- If staff do not know why a pupil is absent, the absence should be recorded as 'N' (no reason provided for absence yet). On the first day, the school's absence procedure will be followed and the registration mark amended as appropriate.
- All staff must record absence, using the agreed codes. Consistent criteria should be applied.

5. Monitoring Absence

- Records of attendance will be reviewed by the Headteacher on a regular basis.
- Weekly discussions will take place between the Headteacher and class teachers where individual pupils have a high absence rate
- Attendance which is below 95% over the course of a term (in a six-term year) is closely monitored by the Headteacher and admin team.
- If attendance falls below 95% and there are no clear reasons, a letter will be sent home to the parent. If this continues the parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss how working together could improve the pupil's attendance. However, if there is no improvement in attendance a further meeting will be called. During this

meeting, it will be made clear that the school will proceed by involving the Education Welfare Service and ultimately legal action if no sustained improvement occurs.

6. Responding to Absence

Involvement of Parents/Carers

- 6.1 If no contact is received from the parent/carer of the pupil on the morning of the first absence, we will contact the parent/carer by telephone on the morning of each absence, or if the parent/carer is unavailable, write a letter requesting information. If this action does not result in an explanation or the return of the pupil to school, a further letter will be sent.
- 6.2 Continued absence will result in a school attendance meeting being arranged. This will involve the Headteacher and/or Parent Support Lead contacting the parent or carer to discuss the matter. If the attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parents/carers to a meeting. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.
- 6.4 If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved and the attendance does not improve, a formal Early Support Assessment (ESA) referral will be made. In consultation with the Education Welfare Service and the Chief Executive if necessary, a recommendation for issuing a fixed penalty fine will be considered.

Safeguarding

- 6.5 It is recognised that frequent absence from and lateness to school could be an indication of abuse or/and an impact of abuse. Attendance reviews therefore consider all aspects of safeguarding as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. Where concerns have been raised about a pupil, additional attendance monitoring/reviews will be carried out.

Reintegration

- 6.6 In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence, an individual re-integration programme will be implemented by the Headteacher and monitored by the class teacher.

7. Other Procedures

Notifying the School of Absence

- 7.1 Parents and carers should ring the school on **each and every day** of their child's absence by 9.15am giving reasons for the absence. An absence of more than 5 days may require the parent/carers to provide further medical evidence in the form of an appointment card, a copy of prescription medication or a letter from the GP.

- 7.2 Failure to notify the school of an absence will result in the absence counting as 'unauthorised'. Parents/carers are informed that it is an offence if they fail to ensure their child attends the school regularly, even if they are absent without the parent/carer's knowledge. Parents/carers should avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours. We are unable to sanction absences for reasons such as shopping, waiting in for a delivery, birthdays or holidays.
- 7.3 Staff are available to give advice from 8.20am every school day should parents/carers be uncertain whether their child should be at the school or not.

Requesting Leave of Absence

- 7.4 The Leave of Absence request form can be found on our website and is available from the school office. We are not permitted to allow permission for holidays in term time in addition to the 13 weeks holiday a year that pupils already have.
- 7.5 A leave of absence request will only be authorised if it is for exceptional circumstances (not a holiday).
- 7.6 If a leave of absence request is refused permission by the school, parents/carers may be issued a Penalty Notice if they still take their child out. Penalty Notices are a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days. If the £120 is not paid, the parents/carers could be taken to court and receive a much larger fine. This will be administered by the Education Welfare Service.

Deletion from School Roll

- 7.7 If we receive notice from parents/carers that a pupil is moving to another school / academy, we will notify the Local Authority (LA) as soon as we become aware.
- 7.8 If we receive verbal notification that parents/carers are withdrawing, their children from the school to home educate them, the school will not wait for the written confirmation before informing the LA via the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The school will only delete the child from roll once they have received written confirmation from the parents/carers, and been contacted by the intake school and/or notification has had time to be received by the LA. The school will not wait until the LA acknowledges the notice nor seek the LA's approval of the deletion.

Children Missing From Education

- 7.9 A child missing from education is a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school / academy roll, nor being educated elsewhere. If a pupil does not attend the school for 10 school days and there has been no response from the parent or carer to our request for information on the whereabouts of the pupil, the school will complete a Missing from Education form and send it to the Education Welfare Service. Reference should be made to the separate Children Missing

from Education policy. We have a duty to keep a child on roll until we are given permission by the EWO to remove them

8. Review

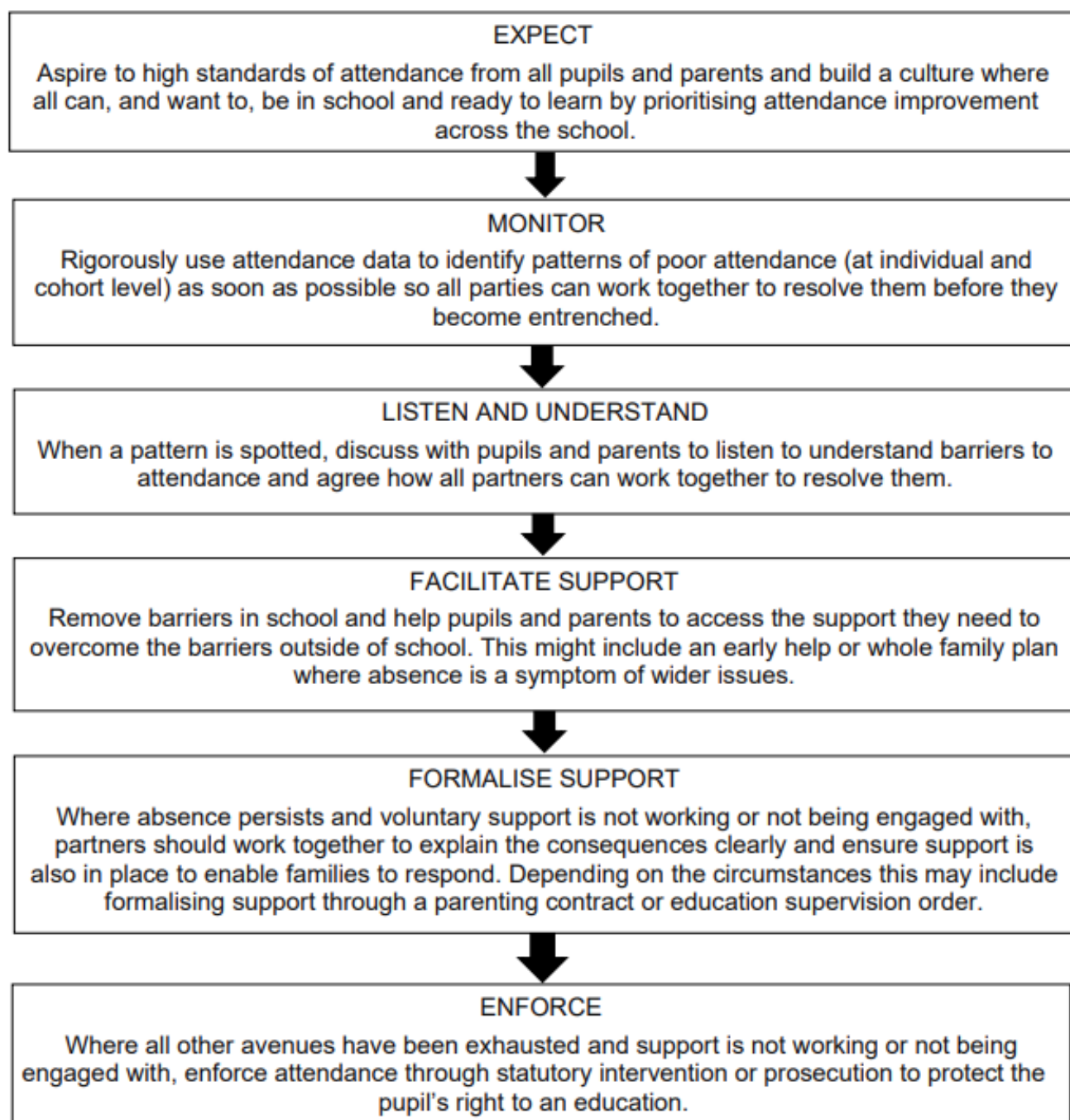
As noted above, this policy and the practices contained in it will be subject to regular review by both the Headteacher and Governors. Part of the evaluation process will be to consider what interventions have been successful. Attendance is scrutinised in the periodical Headteacher's Report. For instance:

- Has the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved?
- How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the local community?
- How well informed are new pupils and their families about the importance of attendance and the policies and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in assemblies or collective worship, lessons or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?
- Have appropriate and timely referrals been made to the Education Welfare Service and advice sought as necessary?

Appendix A

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Appendix B

Holy Trinity Church of England Academy Absence Table

Percentage attendance	Description of Attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent per year	Learning hours lost per year
100%	Outstanding	190 days	0	0 hours
99%	Very good -best chance of success	188 days	2	10 hours
98%		186 days	4	20 hours
97%		184 days	6	30 hours
96%	Good -although room for improvement	182.5 days	7.5	37.5 hours
95%		180.5 days	9.5	47.5 hours
90%	Poor -there is less chance of success and it makes it harder for your child to achieve	171 days	19	95 hours
89%		169 days	21	105 hours
88%		167 days	25	115 hours
87%		165 days	27	125 hours
86%	Very poor -attendance is a serious concern and there will be a huge effect on your child's education and learning	161.5 days	28.5	135 hours
85%		161.5 days	28.5	142.5 hours
80%		152 days	38	190 hours
75%		143 days	47	235 hours

Appendix C Holiday Request Form

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school.

Schools may only agree to an absence request under exceptional circumstances and it is the role of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governors, to advise the Local Authority of any requests that do not satisfy this.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Headteacher will not be considered. Therefore, please be certain to provide details of the special circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Additional information regarding Penalty Notice guidance from the Local Authority can be found on the school website.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth(s)	
Year Group(s)	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	

Special Circumstances (reason) for absence to be taken during term time:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Carer: _____

For school use:

Attendance%:

Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:

Total unauthorised absence this year:

Request authorised: Yes/No

Appendix D

Sample Letter - Absence Request

Absence Request

Dear *****

I write with regard to your recent email regarding absence for ***** during *****.

As you know, we follow the County policy with regard to absences and I'm afraid that the necessary criteria for authorising absence are not met in this case. I therefore regret that absence from school on ***** (* school days) will have to be recorded as unauthorised.

I realise, of course, that the absence has proceeded regardless, but would advise that any further unauthorised absence, which causes the total to amount to 10 sessions (5 full days) within a six month period, will be notified to the Education Welfare Service and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice* to each parent for each child.

Yours sincerely

***the Penalty Notice shall be a sum of £120 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the Local authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' court for the offence of unauthorised absence.**

Appendix E

Sample Letter – Recent Authorised Absence – Impact on Attendance

Date

Dear (name of parent(s))

Re: Child's name and DOB

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I would like to thank you for following the school procedure regarding your child's attendance. We understand that (name of child) has authorised absence recently and you called the school each day to keep us informed. I would like to let you know how this has affected (name of child's) attendance which is currently at (%). Please find enclosed a copy of (name of child) Registration Certificate.

Regular attendance is extremely important, as missing school can impact on learning. Also, I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement.

If (name of child) has a medical condition which could impact on attendance, please ensure the school is fully aware.

Please continue to work with the school. You are more than welcome to contact us to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

Appendix F

Sample Letter – Below 95% Attendance

Date

Dear (name of parent(s))

Re: Child's name and DOB

I am writing to advise you that (name of child)'s attendance has fallen to 95% or below, thus I am becoming concerned that (name of child) is missing a significant part of their learning. I have enclosed a copy of (name of child)'s Registration Certificate which show an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important, as missing school can impact on learning. Also, I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement.

I will continue to monitor (name of child)'s attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement. Should it fall further, I shall be inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting and the school will be requesting medical evidence for any further absences.

If there are any particular circumstances which the school may not be aware of which is to have an influence on (name of child)'s attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please continue to work with the school. You are more than welcome to contact me to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

Appendix G

Sample Letter - Low Attendance Meeting Invitation

Date

Dear (name of parent(s))

Re: Child's name and DOB

I am writing to inform you that (name of child)'s attendance remains a cause for concern. I am aware that continued poor attendance is impacting on (name of child)'s progress and I would like to meet with you to discuss this matter further and implement a plan to improve (name of child)'s attendance.

A School Attendance Meeting is to be held on **(day) (date)** at **(time)** to which you are invited to attend. If the date or time is not convenient, please contact me to enable the meeting to be rescheduled. Please be aware this meeting will go ahead in your absence and you shall receive a copy of the minutes.

Medical evidence is now required for any further absences to be authorised with immediate effect. This may be in the form of an appointment card obtained from your GP, a signed compliment slip stating the date and time of the visit, or alternatively, you can sign a consent form to enable the school to contact your GP directly.

Should (name of child)'s attendance remain irregular, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution through the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix H

Sample Letter – Poor Punctuality

Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

[He/she] arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

[He/she] also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

The school day begins promptly at 9am with the doors being open to pupils from 8.45am. Registration closes at 9.30am. Afternoon registration takes place at 1.15pm.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Please note that unauthorised absences and persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than 10 sessions (5 full days) within a six month period. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on 01249 812424 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Shore

Headteacher

Appendix I

Sample Letter – Approving Religious Observance

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent, and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Shore

Headteacher

Appendix J

Sample Letter – Approving Holiday Request

Your request for a holiday absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I'm able to agree to your request.

I haven't come to this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils, and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for a holiday absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I'll be able to agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Shore

Headteacher