

**ST. PHILIP HOWARD**  
CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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# **Attendance Policy**

## **2017-18**

## **St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Policy Statement**

*“If schooling is to be effective, regular attendance is a prerequisite, and securing it must be a high priority for all concerned”*

Education observed 13 DES Attendance at School 1989

#### **Introduction**

Every child has the fundamental right to be educated. At St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy we aim to provide an environment where all children feel safe and want to learn. Good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the educational and social skills which will equip them for life. It is the duty of parents, carers and teachers to encourage and ensure maximum attendance at school.

#### **Statutory Duties**

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*

- a. To his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- b. To any special education needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

From the Education Act 1996

#### **Aims**

The aim of the attendance policy is to maintain the high standards of which the school is rightly proud. These are:

- Very low levels of unauthorised absences
- High levels of attendance with low levels of authorised absence
- High levels of punctuality

#### **Objectives**

These aims will be achieved:

- a. by monitoring and providing effective information on levels of attendance and punctuality;
- b. by improving communication with parents in relation to their child's attendance;
- c. by providing parents with relevant information about the whole school's attendance record;
- d. through an effective system of monitoring attendance;
- e. through continued regular contact with the Education Welfare Officer;
- f. by raising pupils' awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance and by encouraging in pupils a sense of responsibility.

### **Managing the Policy**

The SLT are responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring attendance throughout the school. However, the school recognises the important role the Form Tutor has in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality. The Pastoral Support Officer is responsible for compiling and supplying attendance information for the school prospectus and the DFE Absence Return.

### **Responsibilities**

Maintaining high standards of attendance at St Philip Howard School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents/carers and staff.

- **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their Form Tutor and, if the need should arise, from the Heads of Year, Pastoral Support Officer and the Assistant Headteacher. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance at the end of each half term. Pupils with inconsistent and poor attendance will be set targets for improvements.
- **Parents/Carers**

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends regularly. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority's education welfare services. Education welfare services conduct all investigations in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

The local authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a School Attendance Order (section 442 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school on the first day, either in writing, which is preferred, or by a telephone call. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. At regular intervals the Deputy will write to parents/carers whose child's attendance is a cause for congratulation or concern. If possible, parents/carers should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

### **Leave of Absence**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amended) Regulations 2013. These amendments as described below came into force on 1 September 2013.

### **Term-time Holiday**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 used to allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that **headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

These changes do not mean that an application for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday cannot be granted by the headteacher. The headteacher has the

discretion to grant leave if he/she believes that there are **exceptional circumstances**. The dictionary definition of exceptional is “unusual” or “rare”. The statutory instrument gives headteachers discretion to grant leave. Each case will be considered on its individual merits; although it will be “exceptional” to authorise leave of absence, there may be circumstances where it would be right and reasonable to do so.

Whilst there is no DfE guidance on what would constitute an exceptional circumstance, below are examples that we have been given by headteachers where leave has been granted.

*(These examples are illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive)*

- Attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement, prison visits.
- Significant family illness.

Circumstances that may not be considered exceptional are:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements.
- Days overlapping with the beginning or end of term.
- Birthday of pupil or family member.

If leave of absence is granted for the purpose of a family holiday registration code H will be used indicating an authorised absence. If leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday is not granted and then taken, registration code G will be used indicating that the absence has not been authorised. This could result in a penalty notice being issued if requested by the headteacher.

Other leave of absence that is granted will be recorded as C in the attendance register which is an authorised absence. Leave not granted, but taken, will be recorded O which is not an authorised absence.

Parents requesting leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** must make the request in writing at least **two weeks** before the anticipated start date. The headteacher will respond in writing with his/her decision as soon as is practicable. Leave of absence cannot be approved retrospectively.

In making the decision the local authority should consider the Attorney General’s Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors. The local authority will take into account the number of unauthorised sessions and any mitigating factors where it would not be in the public interest to proceed with legal action.

Parents who remove their child from the school for the purpose of a family holiday without seeking prior approval can be issued with a penalty notice. If the headteacher has compelling evidence that absences were for the purpose of a family holiday, registration code G should be used. Retrospective approval cannot be given.

On days where the school is closed due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. severe weather conditions): registers will be coded as Y. This will not be counted as an unauthorised absence. Claims by parents that their child is unable to attend school due to severe weather conditions making attendance at school dangerous when the school is open (e.g. living in areas outside Glossop in difficult driving conditions) will be considered individually. A code C may be recorded if approved by the school. If the Headteacher believes that access to school is reasonable and weather conditions are used as a reason for non-attendance, he/she reserves the right to record the absence as unauthorised with an O.

### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents had to pay £60 per child, if they paid within 28 days; or £120 if they paid within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations have reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows the local authority to act faster on prosecutions.

The school has adopted the local authority's Penalty Notice Code of Practice. By adopting the process the school can request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences for leave for the purpose of a family holiday that have not been approved. In line with the code of practice, a blanket ban on holidays has not been adopted.

If a penalty notice is not paid the local authority must consider initiating legal proceedings against the parent/carer, for the original offence of unauthorised absence from school. Section 444, Education Act 1996.

Parents are therefore asked to take their annual holiday during the school holidays. Requests from parents to take leave of absence during term time must be made in writing on the school's leave of absence request form and addressed to the Headteacher with an accompanying letter. It is school policy to judge each request on its own merits. Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The school reserves the right to instigate proceedings for a fixed penalty fine to be

issued to parents who do not seek permission or who ignore the school's refused permission.

Parents/carers whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication. All parents/carers will be informed of their child's levels of attendance and punctuality through their annual report.

- **School**

The governing body, the SLT, teaching and non teaching staff work in partnership with parents and pupils to support the aims and objectives set out earlier in this policy.

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and, liaising closely with parents/carers, will promptly investigate all absenteeism firmly and consistently. Parents and carers are asked to support the school by signing our Home School Agreement in which they agree to support the school in all matters that concern their child's attendance.

The school also works closely with the following agencies in matters connected with attendance:

- Multi-Agency Team (MAT)
- Behaviour Support Service
- School Health
- Educational Psychologist
- Education Welfare Officer Service
- Peak 11 Pastoral Panel
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

The following people are the key school personnel with regard to attendance:

- SLT
- Pastoral Support Officer
- SENCO
- Glossop MAT

- School Nurse

### **Strategies for Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

- accurate information is essential;
- the Form Tutor will keep an up to date register of attendance and monitor punctuality;
- any concerns or persistent absenteeism should be brought to the Head of Year's attention immediately;
- the Head of Year will initially contact home via phone and then by a letter;
- those pupils who are persistently late will be put on a 'punctuality report';
- persistent absenteeism will be raised at the regular meetings with the Assistant Head and Pastoral Support Officer;
  - referrals will be made to the school nurse if illness is an issue;
  - parents are required to attend an Attendance Review meeting at school to discuss ways of improving their child's attendance.

### **Registration**

The key to monitoring students' attendance and punctuality is the keeping of accurate student attendance registers. It is crucial that these are kept accurately, up to date and all staff including supply teachers, consistently comply with the guidelines.

Registration is a legal requirement. By law registers have to be marked twice a day and constitute a legal document. Registration details must be accurately kept, especially as they are primary evidence in court cases for poor attendance. Registers will be called promptly at 8.45am and 1.00pm.

### **The Offence of Failing to Ensure Regular School Attendance**

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring regular attendance at school or alternative provision:

- if a registered pupil is **absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision** then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 which may result in a fine of £1000;
- if the parent **knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him or her to do so**, they are guilty of an offence under



section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 which may result in a fine of £2500 or a prison sentence.

No offence is committed if the parent proves any of several statutory grounds. These include:

- illness or prevention of attendance by any unavoidable cause;
- absence authorised by the school, or by an authorised person in the case of alternative provision;
- failure of the LA to make suitable arrangements for school transport where the school is not within walking distance, (2 miles for children under 8, and 3 miles for children over 8);
- if the child has been excluded from the school, providing that they are attending alternative provision;
- if the child is receiving education otherwise than by regular attendance at school (e.g. home education);
- if the child has no fixed abode and the parent can show that their trade or business requires them to travel, and the child has attended school as regularly as the nature of the trade or business permits, and (if the child is 6 or over) the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions during the preceding twelve months.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

How do we monitor attendance?

### **Form Tutors (FT)**

FT responsible for ensuring electronic register (paper when needed) taken every AM registration

FT responsible for checking reasons for absence and contacting home for notes etc

FT responsible for recording Notification of absence form and bringing it to Pastoral Briefing every Friday so any outstanding absences can be updated by HOY. FT must alert HO when there are ongoing issues with attendance and pupil not responding to interventions by FT

### **Student Reception**

responsible for sending the daily email/text alerts to the parents of pupils not present after 10am. to change attendance codes once contact has been received from parent to notify us of any absence etc to notify FT and HOY of any pupil who has been absent for 3 days or more.

### **Jo Nash (Pastoral Support Officer) (JN)**

JN sends out weekly attendance figures to FT

JN completes half termly summary data for all year groups including separate data for vulnerable groups

JN distributes checking sheets to HOY each midterm (week 3) so HOY gets initial overview of any pupils causing concern

JN liaises with Assistant Head for Attendance, CDawson, to organise any Attendance Review Meetings with those parents whose attendance is below 90%.

JN completes CME forms

### **Heads of Year (HOY)**

Mid-term check- with data (overall form sheets and individual profiles of those falling below 90% threshold so type of absence can be identified) HOY will discuss attendance issues in their weekly pastoral meeting.

- Scrutinising forms where N codes or missing data- HOY will ask form tutors every Friday during Pastoral briefing for their Notification of absence sheets and change any outstanding N codes to keep registers up to date.
- Identifying pupils falling below 95-90%. HOY discuss with pupils and parents who are causing concern and agreed action to improve.

HOY to record action on their attendance intervention logs

Every half term (usually week 3) JN will print data by form group so that HOY can monitor and intervene where necessary.

Week 3 of each half term during pastoral briefing, HOY will scrutinise individual form group data to finalise pupils causing concern and pass on the name of any pupils who need an Attendance Review meeting to JN and CD

HOY to consider any learning issues or curriculum issues and liaise with HOD

HOY responsible for sending monitoring letters home to pupils whose attendance is 90-94%

### **Ciara Dawson, Assistant Headteacher (CD)**

Liaise with HOY and JN over attendance data

Analyse attendance for PP and SEN pupils- identify any causing concern with FT and HOY

Carrying out Attendance Review meetings every half term with JN- meetings to be held with any pupil whose attendance has fallen below 90%. Parents invited to attend these meetings

Offer MAT/External agency support/ Parent Contract as appropriate- arrange escalation attendance panels

Prosecution for PA- liaise with external agency and DCC From Attendance Review Meeting CD to:

- Identify a member of staff to be student and parent's key contact in school
- Ensure weekly contact with parent/carer by key contact
- Review and coordinate resources to support the pupil
- Key contact with external agencies

## **PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Parents/carers should support high standards of attendance as described in the homeschool agreement.
2. Wherever possible parents/carers should avoid keeping pupils at home for minor ailments
3. If a child is unable to attend school, the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day of absence.
4. When the child returns he/she must have either a written explanation in their planner signed by the parent/carer for the dated period of absence or a note signed by the parent/carer which can be filed in case further action is required.
5. Where there are attendance issues the parents/carers are expected to work in partnership with the school and other agencies to resolve problems.

## **ATTENDANCE PANEL LEVEL ONE**

Parents/carers, child and HOY to meet to set out clearly defined targets and offer strategies to help achieve them within an agreed timescale.

## **ATTENDANCE PANEL LEVEL TWO**

Parents/carers, child, Pastoral Support Officer and Assistant Headteacher to meet to review difficulties experienced in meeting targets set by the attendance panel level one. The panel can set further targets and to warn of possible legal proceedings if they are not met.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Form tutors will mark the register on SIMS in the morning using the appropriate codes. Afternoon registration will be completed on SIMS by the teacher who will indicate if students are present, all codes will be added by the office for afternoon registration. Supply staff will be issued with a paper register for the relevant group. If SIMS is not available a paper register will be provided by the office **but the problem must be reported immediately as paper registers will only be issued in an emergency.**
2. Registration period is 8.45-9.00 am late children are marked **(Code L)** by the tutor Children arriving between 9.00-10.00 am are marked **(Code L)** by the attendance officer. Any student arriving after 10.00 am are marked **(Code U)**. LATE AFTER REGISTRATION CLOSES and will not be given an attendance mark If they arrive after 12.15 they are marked absent.
3. Children who do not attend registration **must sign the late books** in student reception.
4. Tutors will give **warnings on the first occasion** a child is **late**. If there is a **second or subsequent lateness** within the week, the tutor will issue a **30 minute detention**. Written notice will be issued to the pupils for a detention on the Friday after school. A copy of the written notice will be given to the Inclusion Manager to monitor attendance at the detention. Detentions will be run by the HOY on a weekly basis.
5. Persistent lateness is as serious as non attendance and will be dealt with in a similar manner.
6. Only the school can **authorise absences**. This, on production of a parental note, is normally given for:
  - Illness
  - Medical and emergency dental appointments which cannot be made outside school hours
  - Days of religious observance (Holydays of Obligation within the Catholic Faith, for example, are observed in school)

- Interviews with prospective employers (Year 11 Students) where this is linked to future education or employment. Verification should be supplied in advance.
  - Exclusions.
  - Family bereavements
  - Special occasions eg family wedding
  - Public performances where the child has been licensed by the local authority and where participation has been agreed with the school in advance.
  - Other circumstances not covered by the above where parents feel there are mitigating circumstances for absence. Such circumstances should be discussed with the HOY in advance.
7. Students who are off site for **approved educational activities** will be counted as present for the purposes of the annual absence return. Such activities, authorised by the school may include:
- Dual registration arrangements.
  - Field trips and educational visits
  - Participation in or attendance at sporting or musical activities
  - Work experience
  - Link courses, whereby students attend a further education college for part of the time (Years 10 and 11 students only)
  - Franchised students receiving part of their tuition off-site eg due to sickness
8. The Governing Body have agreed that the Headteacher **will not give authorisation for holidays for any pupils during term time** unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Each case will then be judged on its own merits and will be at the discretion of the Governing Body/Headteacher.
9. It is the tutor's role to keep the register up-to-date by entering the appropriate codes for absences by using **'amend roll call'** on SIMS.

### **UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.

This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions or legal proceedings.

- Parents/carers keep children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips or holidays in term time which have not been agreed

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

This is defined as a pupil missing 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Persistent absenteeism will be subject to level two intervention.

### **THE POLICE**

The police have powers (under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) to remove truants found in the community, and to return them either to school or to a place designated by the local authority. It is therefore imperative that students only ever leave the site with written permission from the school office. This will normally be for appointments, or for students who are returning home (in which case home will always be telephoned first).

### **REWARDS**

- 100% attendance is rewarded at every half term during Celebration Assembly
- Pupils are rewarded for good attendance with end of year trips
- Small prizes are awarded to individuals who significantly improve their attendance • Letters are sent home to those pupils who have improved their attendance during their monitoring period

