



**ST. HILD'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

Policy Document

ATTENDANCE

At St. Hild's we aim to serve our community by providing high quality education in a Christian context. We are a comprehensive school guaranteeing equal opportunities, a responsive curriculum and a supportive community. We expect to find God at work in our school.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

"I have come that they may have life in all its fullness (John 10:10)"

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/persistent absence targets. These will reflect both national and Hartlepool attendance targets. An action plan for achieving these targets will be in place annually and there will be regular monitoring by the attendance team:

Joyce Huntington	Home/School Liaison Officer with responsibility for whole school
Grant Carswell	Assistant Head with responsibility for school attendance
Nerys Roberts	Administration lower school with responsibility for managing Go4Schools to analyse, monitor progress and evaluate performance towards achieving those targets .

Our schools targets are:

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Aims:

It is recognised that all pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education with the National Curriculum regulations.

No pupils should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.

In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.

Many pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance.

We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

Expectations

We expect the following from our pupils:

That they attend school regularly.

That they will arrive on time at 8.25 a.m and be appropriately prepared for the day.

That they will inform a member of staff of any problems or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from our parents/carers:

To ensure their child/children attend school regularly and punctually fulfilling their legal responsibility.

To ensure that they contact the school by telephoning 01429 273041 by 8.45 a.m or as soon as is reasonably practical on the first day and then every subsequent day of absence, with the reason for absence and stating the estimated day of return, whenever their child/children is/are unable to attend.

To ensure that their child/children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have completed homework.

To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects their child's/children's performance in school and work actively with school and any relevant multi agency professionals to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

Not to book holidays in term time.

To engage with and attend all meetings arranged in school promoting best practice in attendance and punctuality removing barriers to learning.

To attend attendance panels with Heads of Year/Progress Leader/Deputy Head and Home School Liaison Officer.

To update contact details i.e., telephone numbers and addresses

To collect pupils from school or nominate an appropriate person on the occasion that a pupil needs to leave the school site e.g., illness, appointment or exclusion

Parents/Carers and Pupils can expect the following from school:

Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance with prompt investigation of absenteeism and lateness, producing attendance reports at least annually.

Early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason, parents/carers fail to notify the absence i.e., telephone call or home visit.

Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their parents unless their child/children are at risk of harm).

We will reward good attendance which acknowledges the efforts made by students to maintain or improve their attendance and punctuality.

We will encourage good attendance/punctuality and will communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance/punctuality.

Liaison with Heads of Year to provide parents/carers with support and advice and guidance where necessary.

To enforce the legal requirement to attend school punctually and reserve the right not to authorise absence for persistent offenders or where there is no reasonable explanation.

We will provide a quality education.

School Organisation

In St. Hild's every member of staff is aware good attendance will result in a pupil achieving their best at GCSE and every member of staff has the responsibility to promote good attendance. In addition some members of staff have specific responsibilities:

Acting Headteacher

To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole attendance policy.

To regularly report progress on attendance to the Governing Body and the Local Authority.

To ensure challenging and achievable attendance targets are set to reduce absence and persistent absence.

Deputy Headteacher

To liaise with Home/School Liaison Officer re attendance action plan.

To liaise with Home/School Liaison Officer re referrals to Local Authority Attendance Team.

To liaise with Home/School Liaison Officer re day to day concerns regarding attendance.

To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.

To liaise with Systems and Administration Manager regarding electronic collection of attendance data (Lesson Monitor).

To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.

To line manage the Home/School Liaison Officer.

To report to the Leadership team on attendance matters.

To report to the Hartlepool Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership regarding attendance data relevant to St. Hild's.

Progress Leaders and Heads of Year

To collate and analyse attendance data pertaining to their responsibilities.

To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.

To reinforce the importance of good attendance and promote attendance initiatives at team meetings.

To liaise with Home/School Liaison Officer as appropriate.

To allocate Head of Year to become involved with specific pupils experiencing attendance difficulties.

To plan for the return of long-term absentees and to organise a Team Around the Child (TAC) to draw up a care plan or learning programme for that pupil.

To promote the importance of good attendance through year group meetings.

Home/School Liaison Officer

Home-School liaison with regard to attendance

Negotiate 6 week/half-termly attendance plans in collaboration with relevant Head of Year for individual pupils.

Monitor on a daily basis the absence of pupils and be responsible for ensuring parents/carers authorise absences.

Monitor the punctuality of pupils arriving after 8.30 am and before 9.55 am and, in collaboration with relevant Head of Year, negotiate punctuality contract with individual pupil and parent/carer.

Liaise with the Local Authority with regard to punctuality contracts

To work in collaboration with Progress Leaders and Head of Year to ensure smooth transfer of pupils with poor attendance from KS2→3 and KS3→4.

To work closely with Examination Officer and Invigilation Teams to ensure maximum attendance at examination sessions.

To provide "working records" which are accessible to Student Services with regard to individual pupils.

To liaise with Hartlepool Local Authority Attendance Team to work towards the improved attendance of pupils with less than 90% attendance

Form Tutors

To complete registers accurately and on time

To email Home/School Liaison Officer of any absences or lates by close of registration

To follow up any unexplained non-attendance by contacting parents

To display rewards information which reflects pupils' attendance data

To record reason for absence in register

To inform relevant Head of Year with information about any pupil whose attendance/pattern of attendance is causing concern

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30 am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. [*DFES guidance suggests a maximum of 30 minutes but schools can choose to use a shorter period.*] Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close.

Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

The return to school after a long-term absence requires special planning and may involve support from relevant Head of Year to ensure smooth re-integration into all curriculum areas. The Transition/Progress Leader will request a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to be convened and an individual support plan recorded in a Learning Programme for the pupil completed.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities, as they arise, to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.
The Home/School agreement is used to promote good attendance.

Holidays in term time

Changes have been made to the 2006 Attendance Regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These changes make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It also details that it is the Head Teachers' responsibility to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Therefore from 1st September 2013 the only allowable absence in term-time that will be authorised are those due to:

- A family crisis
- A family wedding
- A death in the family

Please note leave will be granted to those serving in the armed forces and shift workers who can show that a holiday in term-time is unavoidable.

It is important to note that these changes are being implemented by the Government and not the school. Changes mean that the Local Authority, in consultation with the Headteacher, can issue a fine for parents that take pupils on holiday in term-time.

If leave is taken and is not authorised then the parent/carer has committed an offence under Section 444 Education Act 1996. This can be subject to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under subsection 1 and 1a of this Act

Penalty notices (Sec 444a and 444b) offer the opportunity to a parent/carer an alternative to prosecution under the Act by enabling them to discharge their liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty of £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days

Encouraging attendance through awards:

St. Hild's encourages attendance in the following way, attendance and punctuality at every lesson generates a credit through the school rewards system.

Responding to non-attendance:

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.
Credits are lost through the school's rewards system

Interventions in cases of absence:

Under 95% - Tutor discusses concerns with pupil and informs Head of Year and Home/School Liaison Officer

Under 90% - Persistent absence

- Letter sent to parent/carer to invite them into school for a meeting with Head of Year and Home/School Liaison Officer
- Referral made to Local Authority for fast track or an attendance case conference. This is likely to lead to a fixed penalty or other legal consequence

Truancy

- Meeting with Head of Year
- Sanction for truanting issued
- Inform parent/carer and appropriate staff of the truancy
- Ensure truancy is recorded on the pupil's record

The registration system

St, Hild's uses a computerised registration system, Lesson Monitor for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Electronic back-ups are kept of our registers. It is legal requirement that we keep register information for at least three years.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

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

[a] To his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he/she may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Unauthorised Absence
- Authorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason e.g.,

- Family holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Truancy
- Absences for reasons such as shopping, hair/beauty appointments, birthdays, no uniform etc.,
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Performances or sporting activities which are non school activities
- Absence for any commercial ventures

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996 e.g.,

- illness - evidence from a medical professional may be required
- A medical appointment, which should be made outside of school hours where possible. Appointments within school hours should be evidenced by an appointment card or medical letter
- Religious observance
- Family bereavement
- An interview

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Pupils with Learning Passports in Key Stage 4 which include external training providers
- Pupils with Learning Passports in Key Stage 4 who receive an academic education at our off site provision (Hamylyn)
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration