

# Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School



## Attendance Policy and Procedures

Reviewed March 2018

Governor Approved March 2018

Revised July 2018 (following meeting with LA Attendance Officer)

Next Review due March 2021

Safeguarding Policies

### MISSION STATEMENT

At Holy Trinity Rosehill VA CE Primary School we:

- Love God
- Love Learning
- Love Each Other

### SCHOOL ETHOS STATEMENT

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian and British values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

### SCHOOL AIMS

- Give high priority to the spiritual development of pupils, enabling them to develop attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility and to realise their full potential.
- Foster a sympathetic understanding of the Christian faith whilst exerting no pressure to believe.
- Encourage strong links between school, home and church and prepare pupils for life in the wider community.
- Encourage respect for other people's property, the school and the local surroundings.

- Provide an intellectually stimulating environment where children will develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Make learning fun.
- Create a strong ethos where children can achieve their potential.
- Develop pupil's self-confidence and raise their self-esteem so they will learn to work with independence and self-discipline.
- Provide a warm friendly atmosphere where children gain respect and tolerance of, and show a caring attitude for others.
- Show a caring attitude towards all children and adults concerned with the school.

## 1. **Statement of Intent**

At Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School we believe that regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it must therefore be a high priority of the school, governors, Local Authority, parents, carers and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

The aim of Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School is to facilitate our pupils' regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils.

Parents and carers have a vital role to play and there is a strong emphasis on maintaining home-school links and good communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

## 2. **School Attendance – The Statutory Framework**

Education Act 1944 – Establishes the duty of parents and carers to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Education Act 1996 – Establishes the duty of LA's to enforce school attendance (Section 444). The Act states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 – Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991.

Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OfSTED) – 2011.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amending Regulation 3 (2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

Pupil Registration Regulations 1995 (Amended) gives schools discretionary powers to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time.

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003)

Pupil Registration Regulations 2006, revokes previous Regulations of 1995 and the subsequent amendments of 1997 and 2001 (England only). It places a requirement on schools to put pupils on the admissions and attendance registers on the first day that they are expected to attend not, as previously, when they first attend.

The statutory Guidance from the DfE, published in August 2013 gives further recommendations that Head Teachers should NOT authorise absence during term time.

### 3. Registration

- 3.1 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 (Pupils Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This is shown on our computer records.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the Head Teacher's role. Head Teachers have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils' in the class groups. Head Teachers also have responsibility for ensuring contact is made with home regarding concerns about attendance and punctuality and also ensuring that accurate registers of attendance and information explaining absences is gained.
- 3.4 In accordance with current legislation, each class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9:05 am in KS2 and 9:10 am in KS1 and 1:20 pm for both stages. Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School uses electronic SIMS registration which is accessible by the school office at all times.

It is our policy at Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place.

- 3.5 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. Registers close at our school at 9:05 am in KS2 and 9:10 am in KS1, children arriving at school after this time will be recorded as absent in the register and an unauthorised registration code entered in the child's register. For health and safety purposes children are signed in at the main office.

### 4. Absence

- 4.1 It is the parent or carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We ask that a parent or carer telephones the school office before 9am each morning their child is absent to discuss the reason for the absence. Where applicable the parent or carer should present medical evidence (e.g. prescription/ appointment card) to explain the absence. We will ask for an expected return date to school.
- 4.2 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 and carers.**

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 it if the school does not 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 initiate Early Intervention procedures, at the earliest opportunity, and involve the Attendance and Exclusion Team Stockton BC 01642 528732 if necessary.

- 4.3 An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised 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 and school attendance procedures followed. **Absence will be referred to the Attendance and Exclusion Team when there is a minimum absence of 10 sessions (5 school days) which are classed as unauthorised during the past 6 school weeks.**

- 4.4 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.
- 4.6 Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, School will seek the advice and support of the School Health Service or may wish to seek permission from the child's parent to consult with their GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the School Health Service.
- 4.7 We encourage where possible parents and carers to only take children out of school for dental and medical appointments where this is an emergency or essential (i.e. planned hospital appointment).

## 5. Reporting of Absence Procedure

- 5.1 Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol on the computer records.

We expect that parents and carers will contact the school by telephone and report the reason for absence on the first day of absence before 9am. Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School operates a first day calling system. If we have not received a reason for absence by 9am on the first day of absence a member of school staff will contact the home contact number to try to ascertain the reason for absence. If the absence continues to the second day then all contact information will be used to attempt to discuss the absence with the parent. Where concerns continue, the family will be invited in for a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and an Attendance Support Plan will be put in place. If concerns continue, or no contact can be made, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance and Exclusion Team under attendance / children missing education procedures.

- 5.2 The school office staff will record all notes and notes of telephone messages and a note of any verbal explanations on the SIMS registration tool.
- 5.3 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 purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. We ask parents and carers to record this on the relevant form in our school offices. A member of office staff will make a note in the relevant day's column in the register as to the times the child came or left so that there is information on the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.

## 6. Holidays in Term Time

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays in term time. The Pupil Registration Regulations state that Head Teachers should NOT grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child.

If parents and carers feel that exceptional circumstances apply to their family then they should complete an Absence Form, which they may obtain from the offices, if they intend to remove their child from school for this purpose. It should be completed and returned to the school office who will send it to the Head Teacher for individual consideration. The parent will receive written notification as to whether the holiday absence is granted. **Unauthorised holidays with a minimum absence of 10 sessions (5 school days) will be referred in to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued following the Local Authority "Penalty notice code of conduct and procedures for attendance and exclusion".**

## 7. 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.

Some Key points: -

- 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) it must be treated as unauthorised and the register recorded 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 and carers should not expect, or be led to expect, that, as of right, schools will agree to family holidays during term time. These will only be granted under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head Teacher;
- 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 the Local Authority Attendance and Exclusion Team.

## **8. Punctuality**

- 8.1 It is Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA 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.
- 8.2 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 late arrival.
- 8.3 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 school office.
- 8.4 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. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep the Head Teacher informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

## **9. Attendance Procedures**

- 9.1 The Head Teacher will prioritise the list of pupils to be referred to the Attendance and Exclusion Team. These circumstances include:
- (i) When Holy Trinity Rosehill Primary CofE VA School, despite several attempts by phone and also by letter, is unable to make contact with the parent.

- (ii) If attendance has fallen below 85% and the absence is unauthorised.
- (iii) When school has offered all support available but attendance fails to improve.
- (iv) When the school has reason not to accept the parents and carers justification for absence on a regular basis.

## **10. The Role of the Attendance Administrator**

10.1 The role of our designated Attendance Administrator 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 and provide school with advice on strategies to improve attendance;
- provide advice and support to parents and carers through the initiation of attendance procedures
- work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality and/or are preparing to transfer to secondary school
- assist school in setting attendance targets;

10.2 Referral to the Local Authority Attendance and Exclusion Team (Fixed Penalty Notice)

The parent must not have a previous conviction for non attendance and attendance procedures must not be currently instigated.

Referral to the Local Authority Attendance and Exclusion Team. will be made in the following circumstances:

- a minimum absence of 10 sessions (5 school days) which are classed as unauthorised during the past 6 school weeks is on the pupils attendance register.
- a pupil has been absent for two consecutive weeks and the absence is unauthorised;
- the intervention by the school has failed to secure a pupil's regular attendance.
- an absence of 10 sessions (5 school days) for taking holiday leave during the current term without permission of the school has been accrued

Referrals can only be made through the Head Teacher. A referral form will be completed for each pupil.

The Attendance Officer will meet with the Head Teacher on a monthly basis and progress reports on referrals made reviewed and discussed.

## **11. Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality**

11.1 As well as taking appropriate action against parents and carers who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at Holy Trinity Rosehill Primary CofE VA School.

Attendance is discussed with the whole school every Friday during Celebration Worship and is celebrated on our newsletter.

Attendance and punctuality will also be rewarded through annual prizes for 100% attendance for the

academic year.

## **12. School Targets**

To enable school to achieve targets systems have been set in place to:

- Provide and interpret detailed and robust data on school attendance.
- Develop a strategic target setting culture.
- Develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure targets both on a school and individual pupils' level are being met.
- Publish targets and achievement around school

**Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School  
Procedures for promoting good attendance  
September 2017**

**School support**

- First day calling to obtain a reason and an expected return date.
- Meeting with a member of staff to discuss any issues and overcome any barriers.
- Offer advice and sign-posting to different agencies and professionals e.g school nurse.
- Attendance support plans/Early Intervention initiatives/Home visits/Early Help Assessment referral

**Consecutive absences due to illness**

First day of absence:

- First day calling to obtain reason for absence and expected return date.
- Absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided by the parent/carer.
- If the expected date of return is 5 days, parents and carers are informed that they need to seek medical advice as 10 sessions (5 days) absence, without medical evidence, could result in in-school attendance procedures.
- If contact cannot be made a home visit will be made by (at least) two members of staff (one will be from the SLT). If there are Safeguarding concerns the Children's Hub will be contacted 01429 284284.

Expected date of return:

- If the child does not return on the expected date, school to contact the parent again to obtain the reason why.
- Parent/carer will be informed verbally that they should seek medical advice or further medical advice.
- If absence has reached 8 consecutive sessions, without medical evidence, parent/carer to be contacted, by phone and letter, to offer support in getting their child back to school.
- If absence continues, parent/carer to be invited to a meeting with a member of staff

**Accrued absence procedures**

Non attendance reaches 6 sessions (3 days)

- When a child accumulates 6, non-consecutive, sessions (3 days) absence, within the required referral window of 6 weeks, the parent/carer will be contacted by letter outlining the different ways we can support them and informing them that they could be put on an attendance support plan if the child has another day off in the next x number of days remaining in the referral window.

Non attendance reaches 8 sessions (4 days)

- Parents and carers /carers invited into school to discuss their child's attendance with a member of SLT.
- Attendance support plan will be put in place.
- We will request a home visit to see the child.

**Monthly monitoring**

- Letters are to be sent to the families of children who have below 96% attendance (in the previous month) outlining the importance of good attendance and the support we can offer.

**Attendance support plans**

- These will last for 6 weeks and outline responsibilities of parents and carers /carers and school support. Any absence in this period, without medical evidence, will result in a referral.
- Parents and carers /carers will not be put on a plan more than twice in an academic year.