

Policy last reviewed:	June 2025
Next review due:	June 2026
Member of staff responsible	Assistant Headteacher – Safeguarding and DSL
Governor's Committee:	FGB

Vision Statement:	Our vision is to be a centre of excellence for learning, inspired by Christian values, where every person in our school community fulfils their potential.
Mission Statement:	Our mission is to be a deeply Christian inclusive community which values every individual as a child of God.
Values Statement:	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 values through the experience it offers to all its students.

Dignity	Underpinning all that we do is the core belief in the ultimate worth of each person as a child of God – precious, valued and loved by God. Dignity comes from the knowledge of our ultimate worth as human beings.
Community	Having understood our value as individual human beings, we express this value through the quality of the relationships that we share with each other. Community, living well together, is of very great importance to us as a school, as is the place we each take in the wider community locally, nationally and internationally.
Wisdom	As a school we seek to foster confidence, delight and discipline in seeking wisdom, knowledge and truth. This is achieved through the nurturing of academic habits and skills, emotional intelligence, resilience and creativity across the breadth of the curriculum.
Hope	As we prepare our students for the future we look to open up horizons of hope and aspiration, encouraging our students to embrace these with confidence and sending them out to make a difference to the world in which they live.

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1. Our Vision

We are committed to ensure students maintain excellent attendance, enabling them to achieve their full potential. There is robust evidence to support the relationship between good school attendance and academic attainment. Students who have regular attendance are far more likely to achieve academic success as shown below:

We have the ambition that every child will strive for 100% attendance.

We will work alongside students, parents/carers, and staff to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities to best support attendance so students can fully participate in the school community.

2. Legal Framework

1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- a. Education Act 1996
- b. Equality Act 2010
- c. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- d. DfE (Department for Education) Working together to improve school attendance 2022
- e. DfE Children Missing in Education 2016
- f. DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (2024 from September 2024)

2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- a. Safeguarding Policy
- b. Complaints Policy
- c. Behaviour Policy
- d. Children with Medical Needs who cannot attend school

3. Definitions of Student Absence

1. HTS (Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School) defines "absence" as either:

- a. Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9:15am.
- b. Not attending school for any reason. Every half day absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

2. HTS defines an "authorised absence" as:

- a. An absence for genuine illness
- b. Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the school day for which the school has granted leave – the school kindly requests that such appointments are made outside of school hours but if this is not possible then endeavour to make them at the start of the day or as late in the school day to minimise disruption to your child's education
- c. Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- d. An absence due to a family emergency

3.3 Holy Trinity defines an “unauthorised absence” as, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Children who arrive after the register has closed at 9:15am
- b. Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason
- c. Truancy before or during the school day
- d. Absences which have not been reported or properly explained e.g., with specific dates, by the parent/carers
- e. Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- f. Leaving school for no or unnecessary reason during the day

HTS defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as Attendance of 90% or less across the academic year for any reason.

4. Expectations, Roles, and Responsibilities

1. Student Expectations

The HTS minimum expected attendance for every student is 95%
This is referred to throughout this policy as “regular attendance.”

Excellent punctuality is also an expectation of students. Being punctual each day prepares students well for the world of work and later life. All students are expected to;

- a. Be in school on time and arrive to lessons on time
- b. Be punctual to all other school events, trips, and activities they take part in and that are linked to the school
- c. In exceptional cases where a student has a diagnosed medical condition/need, the condition/need is supported by an up-to-date diagnosis, and where the specific condition/need is known to impact the student’s ability to attend school we will make reasonable adjustments to the application of this policy/attendance processes
- d. Where supporting evidence is not received or there is no clinical professional’s support for the need of absence no adjustments can/will be made

2. Parental Expectations

Ensuring a child’s regular school attendance is a parent/carer’s legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from your child’s school that is not authorised creates an offence in law. The 1996 Education Act states; *“as a parent, you must ensure your child receives appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability, and aptitude. If your child is registered at a school, then they must attend regularly and punctually. It is your responsibility as the parent to ensure good attendance.”*

By sending your child to school at Holy Trinity, parents and carers accept their statutory responsibilities and commit to sharing the school’s principles on good attendance. Ensuring their child attends regularly with excellent punctuality.

Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details for themselves, including at least two telephone numbers.

Parents must provide contact details for at least one other responsible adult, including at least two telephone numbers.

Parents are responsible for updating the school of any changes.

3. School Expectations

The Year Group and Pastoral Team are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and for distributing these to parents.

All staff will be responsible for;

- a. Providing a safe learning environment, which gives a sympathetic response to any students concerns
- b. Following the attendance policy and ensuring students do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- c. Modelling good attendance behaviour – promoting a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality
- d. Form tutors will monitor attendance of their tutees and address any concerns. Where appropriate raise concerns with the Pastoral Team.
- e. Encourage and reward good attendance

When attendance falls below 90% the Pastoral team will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Staff will take the register within the first ten minutes of registration periods (and every lesson)

The school will ensure that every student has access to a full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The school will inform the Local Authority of any student being removed from the school roll if they:

- a. Are being off rolled for Elective Home Education
- b. Have applied for a school transfer through the Local Authority and the place at the new school has commenced
- c. No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school
- d. Are in custody for more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonable believe they will be returning
- e. Have been permanently excluded

The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance consistently. Please refer to Appendix A

5. **Absence Procedures including reporting genuine illness**

1. Parents/carers are requested to report their child's absence via StudyBugs each day that their child is off school. This must be communicated at the start of the day no later than 08.00 am. If no message has been received, office staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer by email. A prompt response is required by the parent/carer to report the child's absence. Failure to inform the school of absence will result in unauthorised absence coding being applied. Further unreported absences will be followed up by a call from a member of the attendance team to ascertain the reasons for absence. This procedure will be followed for every day of a child's absence.

Any extraordinary explanations from parents (e.g., outlining a family problem, a recurring medical condition, serious complaint) will be discussed with the Pastoral team who will decide on any appropriate action to be taken.

The following advice from the NHS is a good guide for parents regarding whether their child should still attend school: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

2. The school will always follow up any absences to;
 - a. Ascertain the reason for the absence
 - b. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken
 - c. Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
 - d. Identify the correct code to use to enter the data on to the school system
3. Only the Head of School at HTS (not parents/carers or other relatives) can authorise the absence of your child from school. There is no automatic right for a child to be absent from school. The Head of School at HTS may require you to provide evidence of the reason for your child's absence otherwise, the absence may be recorded on the official school register as unauthorised.

6. Leave of Absence Requests

6.1 Parents requesting an absence for their child should fill in the Leave of Absence Request form (obtainable from Reception and school website) and return it to the school. The Head of School will not authorise any leave of absence during term time, other than in exceptional circumstances. A fixed penalty notice will be issued to parents/carers for any leave of absence that the Head of School has not authorised of five days or more on one occasion or over the course of the academic year.

6.2 Absences will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are unlikely to include;

- a. Leaving early to go on a family trip/holiday or similar
- b. Going to a family wedding

The term exceptional will be considered on an individual basis. Part of the consideration will be the impact the potential absence is likely to have on the individual student's education.

The Head of School's decision is final in relation to authorising exceptional absences.

6.3 In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence, a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be made to the Local Authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are generally issued where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10 school week period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria.

FPNs are issued per parent, per child and are an alternative to prosecution. This gives the parent an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £160, which must be paid within 28 days. If the FPN is paid within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £80.

When FPNs have not been paid within the 28 days the Local Authority will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Alternatively, the Local Authority may transfer the case to an Investigating Officer.

When a parent has received two FPNs in a three-year period, the offer of a FPN will not be available. Instead, the matter will be transferred to the courts. Should the period of unauthorised absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, a FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead, the matter may be brought directly before the court.

7. Persistent Lateness and Persistent Unauthorised Absence

7.1 Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with a code U. This is classified as a missing session and is an unauthorised absence.

7.2 Late students must arrive through reception – children who arrive at school between 08.45 and 09.10 will receive a Late code. Students who arrive at school after 09.15 will receive a U Code. Sanctions will be applied for lateness unless there is a good reason for the late arrival. Late arrival can be authorised in cases of known delays with public transport or known appointments with parents/carers providing the school with appropriate information.

7.3 If absence becomes a cause for concern and drops to 95% or below then intervention may be triggered. This could include an Attendance Improvement Plan meetings with the Pastoral Team where attendance targets will be agreed, and a letter sent to parents / carers outlining expectations. These meetings will discuss reasons for absence, strategies for improving attendance, and how the school can work together to improve the student's attendance. When a child becomes a persistent absentee, a further letter will be sent to parents requesting the need to have medical evidence for any absences due to illness and a reminder that absences will be unauthorised unless supporting documentation is received. A referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be made to the Local Authority for the following reasons: -

- When a student has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised. (A School Day is two sessions AM and PM.)
- Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised i.e. if you fail to provide evidence of an absence or your child has truanted, will be recorded as unauthorised absence (Code 0)
- If your child is ill for a period of 5 days or more, we would expect them to have seen a doctor. For illnesses of this duration, we will ask to see supporting medical documentation, which can be in the form of a medical certificate/note from your GP, a photocopy/scan of any prescription, a signed appointment card or a screen shot of your call to the surgery

- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken is recorded as an unauthorised absence (Code U)
- A holiday or period of absence in term time of 5 or more days, which has not been authorised by the Head of School (Code G). The Government has directed that Head Teachers may now only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances
- If you notify the school that your child is ill prior to or after a period of either authorised or unauthorised absence, you will need to provide medical documentation, or the absence will be unauthorised and if the total number of days is 5 or more than a referral may be made for a Fixed Penalty Notice
- If you withdraw your child/children from school during term time, without authorisation being requested in advance, in line with the school's policy
- FPNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school
- An externally suspended student in a public place without good reason during the school day

If attendance does not improve there will be a referral made to the Pupil Entitlement investigatory team at WSCC.

7.4 If a student is finding it difficult to get to school then contact should be made initially with the student's tutor who can seek guidance from the Pastoral Team if this is an ongoing cause for concern. The tutor / senior tutor /PBM (Pastoral and Behaviour Manager) or Year Leader may be able to suggest strategies to remove barriers to enable students to attend school on time.

8. Monitoring and review of attendance

HTS monitor's attendance and punctuality regularly throughout the year.

The school attendance target is 95%

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head Teacher with the lead for Attendance.

Any changes to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders.

9. School Support for regular attendance

Staff will address attendance, and punctuality concerns frequently through agreed processes. This may involve;

- Communication with parents/carers either in person, by letter, telephone call, e-mail, or a combination of these within an agreed time frame.
- Meeting with students in school to discuss our concerns
- Meetings with parents / carers and/or externally involved professionals
- Setting attendance targets and using attendance improvement plans
- Pastoral support and onward referrals to specific services
- Liaison (with permission) with external medical professionals to evidence specific conditions/needs
- Making announced or unannounced home visits

- The Family Liaison Officer will visit parents and students based on agreed criteria
- The Family Liaison officer will meet with the Designated Schools Team who will support when required.

10. Rewarding good attendance

The school rewards students for high attendance by:

- awarding achievement points for 100% attendance in a term
- providing students with achievement certificates for 100% attendance
- Making attendance part of every formal school report sent home to parents and carers
- Improved attendance by meeting

11. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work or modelling

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head of School to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head of School's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

12. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport.

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head of School's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head of School and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Where permission is granted, please get in contact with their tutor so that we can work out how best to support them so that their academic progress is not harmed and that coming back into school is not stressful.

Attendance Codes used for registration purposes:

Mark	Mark Name
#	School Closure
/	Present
?	Precreated
B	Ed. Off site
C	Other Authorised Absence
D	Dual Reg
E	Excluded
G	Hol NA
I	Illness
J	Absent with leave for an Interview
K	LA Arranged provision
L	Late
M	Med/Dental
N	No Reason
O	Unauthorised Absence
P	Sporting Act
Q	No Access arrangements
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Trav. Absence
U	Late Reg closed
V	Ed Visit
W	Work Exp
X	Non-comp school age absence
Y	Unavoidable cause
Z	Not yet on roll