

HOLY TRINITY PEWLEY DOWN SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Rationale

1.1 We believe regular school attendance is very important. Without it the best efforts of our teachers and the school will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of truancy, and anti-social or criminal behaviour.

1.2 As a school we therefore see the maximising of attendance rates as one of our key tasks and do everything we can to highlight to parents the need for their children to make good and regular attendance at school.

2. The partnership between parents and the school

2.1 Under section 36 of the Education Act 1944, parents are required to ensure that children receive efficient full-time education.

2.2 As soon as children begin school, parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems, which may lead, to non-attendance. At Holy Trinity Pewley Down we take these responsibilities very seriously.

2.3 Parental responsibility actually extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should also ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and ready to learn. The school has a strong tradition of partnership with parents in the education of their children. This means instilling in your children a respect for education - and for those who deliver it - and ensuring that pupils complete their homework. We also expect that parents support the school's high expectations of behaviour.

2.4 It is parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence and at Holy Trinity Pewley Down we ask that this is done on the first day of absence, by telephoning our dedicated message line, or by fax, or email. We like to know the nature of the illness and the day the child is expected to be able to resume his or her studies. Please send a letter of explanation with the child on his/her return, especially if the absence is longer than initially indicated.

3. Approved absences

3.1 Within the context of the law, it is possible for the Headteacher to approve some absence other than that caused by illness. These are called 'authorised absences'. The circumstances of each application will be considered on its own merits and in the context of the child's overall attendance pattern. Applications should be made in advance, in writing or in person.

3.2 We set out below some helpful examples, but stress that the circumstances of each individual request are taken into account and that there are no 'norms' or blanket approvals: -

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments, if supported by a note from the parents	usually authorised
Special Occasions - only truly "exceptional occasions" - a "one-off", <u>not</u> a regular event (e.g. birthday), advanced notice given, event of exceptional nature, looked at alongside overall attendance pattern of child	usually authorised
Family Bereavements	usually authorised
Days of religious observance	authorised
Off-site activities (music exams, special tuition)	authorised
Shopping during school hours	unauthorised
Long weekends	unauthorised
Birthday treats, theatre visits in school time	unauthorised
Absence without prior authorisation/no explanation forthcoming	unauthorised
Pupils accompanying parents in the course of their work	unauthorised

4. Family Holidays

4.1 There is a common misapprehension that up to two weeks' absence can be claimed for the purposes of a family holiday. This is not the case. Holidays need to be authorised, or not, in the same way as any other absence and the procedures set out above need to be observed.

4.2 A child's education does not begin and end at the school gates. We take the view that holidays both enhance a child's education and provide valuable time for a family to be together. However, in normal circumstances one should not affect the success of the other. There are ample opportunities for family holidays to be taken during school holidays (13 weeks) without disruption to a child's education. Only in exceptional and particular circumstances do holidays need to be taken during term time. Applications should be made in the same way as for any other absence (see 3.1 above). The regulations state that a parent has to show why his or her child should be treated differently from others in the school. We believe therefore, it is not enough to say that flights are unavailable, or more expensive during school holidays because this applies to everyone.

4.3 Only in exceptional circumstances may the headteacher grant leave exceeding ten days in any year.

5 Lateness

5.1 Lateness is actively discouraged and regular lateness is unacceptable. Lessons begin promptly at 9.00 each morning and it is important that children are at school in good time for this. Many children enjoy the quiet time that exists between 8.45 and 9.00. It gives them an opportunity to organise themselves, share a book with a friend, talk to their teacher or her assistant, or practise some new skill. Such occasions are an important part of their development.

5.2 When "local circumstances" dictate, (i.e. snow, local traffic problems) the school will keep registers open for 30 minutes.

5.3 If pupils arrive after the register has been taken, this is clearly marked as late in the register.

5.4 We need to have accurate records of who is on the school site. If a child arrives late, parents must report to the school office in order that we know we are responsible for him/her.

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