

St John's Catholic Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

"Christ is the Centre of our School Community where we live, love and learn together"

Introduction:

This is a successful and happy school and your child plays their part in making it so. However for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Our aim is to promote high levels of attendance to best help and support the learning of our pupils. Our school target for attendance is **97%**.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school by reporting to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events. Reward positive attendance with weekly and termly celebration attendance rewards.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. We want our parents and children to know the importance of good attendance and to understand that good attendance is part of staying safe.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing great harm and we need parent's fullest support to address this.

We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level **or at danger of reaching it** and parents will be informed of this immediately so that together we can put a plan in place to get that child back into school. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the **first day** of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- Or, you can speak with any member of staff that you see on the playground or in school and tell them why your child is or has been off school.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you or any named persons on the data collection sheet on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- We will continue to try and contact you until a reason for your child's absence has been established.
- If we are unable to make contact to confirm the reason for the absence then a home visit will be made by the Local Authority EWO, Attendance Officer, Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or a member of the SLT.
- If persistent absence continues, you will be invited into school to discuss the situation with the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Attendance Officer, EWO and Welfare and Child Protection.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Therefore, to help us help you and your child, please make sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties

St John's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher: Miss D Maudsley

Review Date – 09/11/2023

cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PAEWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0151 225 4980.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am the registers will be closed** – in accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site, **but this will not count as a present mark** in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means that you may face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

In the afternoon your child must be in school for **1.00pm**. ***Children who arrive in school during the lunch break having been absent during the morning will not be accepted onto the playground or in the canteen.***

The registers will be closed again at **1.30pm** and again arrival after this time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Governors to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Please be aware of our term dates. As a school we have tried to accommodate certain weeks, attached to term end dates when cheaper holidays and flights are available.

Under new Government legislation; there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time.

Penalty Notices (fines) will be issued to both parents and failure to pay these within the timescales will result in legal proceedings.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Our school target is 97%.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The Government attendance target is 97%.

Our target is to achieve better than 97%: We are aiming for this level because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling and we believe we can achieve this and be amongst the best attended schools in the city.

Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Miss D Maudsley – Headteacher
- Miss K McSteen – Assistant Headteacher
- Mrs L Wooding – Welfare and Child Protection Lead
- Mrs C Poole – Attendance and Punctuality Officer
- Local Authority - EWO

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way possible to ensure a high level of attendance.