

St John's Catholic Primary School



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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

Introduction:

This policy has been produced with reference to: [DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance](#)

This is a successful and happy school that recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of its pupils. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils to support their learning, attainment and progress.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. ***As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.***

We believe that Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of the school community play an important role in contributing to improved attendance and punctuality. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

People responsible for attendance matters in this school:

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

Our Attendance Team:

Headteacher:	Miss D Maudsley
Designated Attendance Lead:	Miss K McSteen
Attendance and Punctuality Officer:	Miss C Robinson
Local Authority:	Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Aims:

- Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below).
- Provide support, advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure there is a proactive whole school approach that embeds a consistency of practice.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, School Health and other partner agencies.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

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.

To help us all to focus on this we will ensure:

- there is a designated senior leader for championing and improving attendance;
- effective strategies are in place to deter poor punctuality;
- an engaging curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly;
- high quality teaching and learning is delivered throughout the school;
- pupils are provided with appropriate support from school and partner agencies to minimise disaffection from school;
- vulnerable groups are provided with effective support at the earliest opportunity and attendance is monitored rigorously;
- effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided;
- parents/carers are kept informed of pupil attendance and punctuality through our school's attendance procedures, termly parents evenings and reports, individual letters and meetings when required;
- good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual pupil incentives;
- attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with children in assemblies;
- attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed;
- individual and whole class attendance reward systems are put in place by class teachers;
- attendance ambassadors are identified in each class to promote attendance in their class and have regular meetings with the Designated Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer.

Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures:

A child not attending school is considered to be a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence from school is required.

Expectations of Parents/Carers:

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours and confirmation of the appointment is provided.

- Contact school on the **first day** of absence if your child is unable to attend, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- In case of emergency we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers (as a school we request a minimum of three emergency contact details be provided).
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone and/or text you or any named persons on the data collection sheet on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- 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, Designated Attendance Lead or a member of SLT.
- If there are safeguarding concerns. contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absence continues the parent/carer will be invited to an attendance meeting in school with the Headteacher, Designated Attendance Lead and Attendance officer to discuss further.
- If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting and the pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, the parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning letter in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct and in agreement with the EWO;
- If unauthorised absences persist the Designated Attendance Lead will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

Understanding types of absence:

Our school must legally record every absence. This is why it is important that parents/carers directly inform school regarding the reason for absence, on the first day of absence.

Authorised Absence:

The school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents, who makes the decision to authorise absence from school.

Unauthorised Absence:

This is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence following a parental request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have not been explained;
- pupils who arrive after the close of registration.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018, Schools can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Persistent Absence (PA)

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DfE) if their attendance falls **below 90%**. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DfE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

Our school attendance officer intervenes and issues regular PA letters to parents/carers to inform them if their child is at risk of becoming a PA and will invite them in for a meeting if necessary.

Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

Severe Absence (SA)

Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the Department of Education (DfE). This cohort of pupils are a priority group for our school and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support your child improving their attendance. It is essential that parents/carers work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

The Education Welfare Officer provides support and advice for parents/carers on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communication between home and school.

The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists, the EWO will be required to consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include Parenting Contracts Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the local authority.

Leave of absence in Term Time:

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

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.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss lesson inputs and important work which they may find distressing and thus this can encourage future absence. Late-arriving pupils also disrupt lessons for other children.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in at that time.

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

Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice. The close of registration for our school is **9.30am**.

If a parent/carers has any problems getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the school and request to speak to the Designated Attendance Lead or any member from the Attendance Team, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

Removal from Roll:

From the 1st September 2016, changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to: Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register. Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school. School must complete an Exit form and submit to the **CME@liverpool.gov.uk** inbox.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- provide the attendance officer with comprehensive information about their plans, including: any date of a move; your new address and telephone numbers; your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to school in writing;
- if a pupil leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Summary:

Our school has a legal duty to promote attendance and communicate with parents/carers regularly regarding children's attendance and punctuality. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend our school every day. Our attendance team and all staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way possible to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality to support their learning, attainment and progress.

Appendix 1

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities

Daily

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on school site by 8.45am • Be in class on time for registration at 9am
	Class Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers are completed on the MIS system each day on time • Ensure attendance has a high profile in classroom • Discuss absence with pupils returning to school • Welcoming long-term absentees back into the class • Use daily class reward systems to promote attendance • Ensure attendance ambassador completes the daily attendance board in classroom/ on classroom doors
	Attendance and Punctuality Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers • Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via MIS • Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason • Log on MIS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences • Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to MIS • MIS in touch messages sent to parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also pupils who arrive late. • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned. • SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required. • Supporting staff with registration queries. • Logging attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical or dental appointments or visits. • Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the first day contact systems. • Daily Late process, log and send actions for relevant staff. • Daily Attendance report sent to DSL for attendance. • Home visits on school mini bus for any families where no contact can be made. • Inform parents/carers of their child's attendance % when contacting them regarding their child's absence that day
	EWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers • Home visits • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.

	Designated Senior Leader for Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with safeguarding requirements. Liaison with EWO, Attendance and Punctuality Officer and Curriculum Lead regarding support work with identified pupils. Home visits with Attendance and Punctuality Officer if required. Daily liaison with the Attendance and Punctuality Officer to monitor absences closely and to determine and monitor appropriate use of attendance codes.
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Weekly:

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their current attendance Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by contacting parent/carers where appropriate.
	Attendance and Punctuality Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing SLT and EWO of pupil patterns of absence. Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for DSL for attendance, and class teachers Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parent/carers Provide weekly punctuality data for the DSL for attendance Update whole school attendance board with each class attendance % for the week Organise coins for class attendance piggy banks for the whole school weekly assembly PA letters sent weekly following PA report 'At risk of becoming a PA' letters sent out regularly throughout the week when required Liaise with EWO in weekly meeting to share information and agree joint actions regarding SA/PA pupils or any other pupils causing concerns
	Curriculum Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise help for pupils to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence
	Designated Senior Leader for Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with safeguarding requirements. Liaison with EWO, Attendance and Punctuality Officer and curriculum lead regarding support work with identified pupils Determine priority actions for the following week

Half Termly:

When	Whom	Actions Expected
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HALF TERMLY	Designated Senior Leader for Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement • Use attendance data to identify and act to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils • Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy • Determine priority actions for the next half term
	Attendance and Punctuality Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and track attendance SA /PA Action Plans • Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions regarding SA/PA pupils or any other pupils causing concern

Termly:

TERMLY	Designated Senior Leader for Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off site provision • School Attendance Review alongside the EWO • Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance • Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively. • Report to SLT and governors on attendance matters • Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and school newsletters promote Attendance • Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents' evenings • Determine priority actions for the next term.
	Head-teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors