



# ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

### 1. Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. It has been proved that irregular attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. Parents are expected to support the school by ensuring that their child attends school as much as possible and arrives at school on time every morning.

### 2. School Times

- children can enter their classrooms from 8.45am.
- the school day begins with registration at 9.00am.
- afternoon registration takes place after lunchtime.
- it is your responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure that the child in your care attends school regularly and gets up in the morning in time to arrive punctually.

### 3. Getting to school

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

#### When children arrive on time:

- registration takes place quickly and smoothly;
- the day gets off to a good start for everyone;
- everyone hears information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected of him or her.

#### When a child arrives late:

- it interrupts concentration;
- they must be signed in the Late Book at the school office
- it wastes valuable learning time;
- the teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait;
- the child is at an immediate disadvantage because he/she may have missed important teaching points and discussions where ideas were shared.

Pupils should be in their class for the registration time. If a child arrives after the register has been completed they will be marked as late and if they arrive after registration has closed (10 minutes later) they will be considered absent. Unless a good reason is given for this absence, it will be marked as unauthorised which could trigger involvement from the Local Authority.

#### **4. Registration**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the day, the parent/carer must contact the school staff with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must be accompanied by a parent or their representative and must notify the school office.

Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

#### **5. Absence**

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences. Parents/carers are required to provide reasons for absences, and the school must decide whether or not these reasons justify authorisation according to government guidelines.

A text message will be sent to the parents if a child is not in school and we do not know the reason for this.

##### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Headteacher authorises the absence.

- genuine illness of the pupil;
- hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil;
- major religious observances directly involving the child, not another family member
- visits to prospective new schools;
- external exams or educational assessments;
- exceptional circumstances.

##### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no

'authorisation' has been given. This list will include:

- shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;
- a birthday treat;
- oversleeping due to a late night;
- looking after other children / other family member;
- appointments for other family members;
- family holiday.

## 6. Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 regulations, which came into force on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays will **no longer** be authorised and should take place during the school holiday dates which are published a year in advance. Governors have agreed:

- in exceptional circumstances, permission for leave may be granted providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- Leave of absence must not normally exceed five days.
- NO leave of absence will be authorised at the beginning of any term or during planned assessment periods (Year 6 May, Year 2 April to June).
- Parents must complete a 'Leave of Absence' request form stating the exceptional circumstances requiring leave to be considered and submitted for consideration by the Head teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 2 weeks prior to the requested date.
- Authorisation will not be given retrospectively. It must be sought in advance.

If leave is taken without authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on your child's education record and Education Welfare will be notified. In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note that the Head teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.

When considering requesting leave of absence, please consider the impact this will have on your child: they will miss part of their education, miss important learning events and may find it hard to settle back into the classroom routine following their absence.

## 7. Encouraging regular attendance:

### Pupil's Role

- attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- arrive at school punctually
- be appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

### Parents/ Carers Role

- contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence and send in a written note detailing the absence when the child returns. The school will do its best to contact parents at home or at work if a child has not arrived at school by 10.00am and there has been no notification of absence
- if possible let the school know in advance of any planned absences, e.g. hospital appointments. Wherever possible medical/dental appointments should be made for after the school day or during holidays
- ensure that he or she has everything needed for school ready the night before;
- ensure regular bedtimes and wake up times on school days
- ensure they arrive at school punctually
- talk to a member of the school staff if there is a problem

- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

### School's Role

- provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and certificates for good / improved attendance
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare.
- will notify the Local Authority after 15 days sickness, and the EWO after 10 days unexplained absence, of any pupil.

## **8. Analysing Attendance**

Your child's attendance can be summarised as follows:

96% +	Good – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
93% – 95%	Below expected – Strive to build on this. Your child's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. A letter may be sent to you to inform you of your child's attendance.
86% - 92%	Poor – Absence is now significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school will meet with you to review the particular context and to plan for improved attendance and/or punctuality. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may be involved at this stage.
85% & below	Unacceptable – Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's development. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. It is probable that a referral to Education Welfare Officer will be made and a meeting will be convened at school to put in place strategies to improve attendance rapidly. Legal proceedings may follow.

At the end of each term we analyse absence and lateness across the school. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In addition we will contact you if your child's attendance or punctuality is causing concern as below:

Attendance falls below 92%

1. For the first time –verbal or written contact with parents, via class teacher, saying attendance is causing some concern and discuss ways of supporting parents to improve this if deemed appropriate.
2. Over a second term with no identifiable reason – letter sent with appointment given to meet Head teacher and begin to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor attendance.
3. If there has still been no improvement – the school will inform you that they are not able to authorise any absence without seeing medical evidence whenever a child is absent.

Lateness is regular or persistent:

1. For the first term – verbal or written contact with parents, via class teacher, saying lateness is causing some concern and discuss ways of supporting parents to improve this if deemed appropriate.
2. Over a second term with no identifiable reason – letter sent with appointment given to meet with the Headteacher and begin to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of lateness.

At St Augustine's we are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All discussions regarding persistent absence will be handled sensitively and in confidence. Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by the Headteacher.