



Ss. Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy



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To be reviewed: November 2018

SS. PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Policy Statement:

The aim of this policy is: To develop good attendance and punctuality to give our pupils the best chance in life.

The most important factor in promoting good attendance and punctuality is the development of positive attitudes towards school so we endeavour to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for everyone. Regular attendance and consistent punctuality are essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills to equip them for life. It is our expectation that every child attends school every day that school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We actively encourage the children to attend, and we put in place appropriate procedures to ensure that we are improving and monitoring attendance.

The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality through the implementation of this policy within which staff, pupils, parents/carers, local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance & punctuality to provide quick and early intervention if a problem is identified and ensure the welfare and safety of all children in school.

Policy Objectives:

- To safeguard the welfare of all pupils through tracking poor patterns of attendance/punctuality and taking required action.
- To maintain an overall attendance level of over 96% with minimal unauthorised absence.
- To encourage, support and reward good attendance and punctuality
- To involve the children in their school attendance and foster good habits to enable them to mature into responsible adults
- To work in partnership with parents/carers about regular school attendance, policy and practice.
- To ensure effective communication and recording processes
- To recognise the important role of class teachers, support staff and parents in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality
- To foster an effective working relationship with The Education Welfare Service.
- To provide clear/accurate attendance data for monitoring, improvement and planning.

Targets:

- School target is 96.5% attendance. This target is reviewed and set annually by the senior staff and governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the national attendance targets figures and targets set by similar schools when setting this target. The school stays updated about government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children.

Registration and Definitions

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will indicate the reason for absence and if the absence is authorised as detailed below:

Authorised absence (approved by the school)

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence (not approved by the school)

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Expectations

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage their children to attend school and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Work in partnership with school to encourage high attendance of pupils.
- Ensure that they contact school on 639 2991 whenever their child is unable to attend.
- Send a note in explaining the reason for absence upon the child's return to school.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, well prepared for the school day.
- Contact school staff in confidence should any problem occur that might keep their child away from school.
- Try to ensure that medical/dental appointments and holidays are taken out of school time.
- Ensure that children only take time off from school when absolutely necessary.
- Notify school immediately of any change in contact details.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from the school:

- A high quality education for their children
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- A letter will be sent home if an explanation for an absence or regular lateness is not received.
- Contact with parents/carers if a child is regularly late for school.
- Active encouragement for consistently good punctuality and attendance.

Dissemination of policy:

Parents/carers:

Parents/carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters and regular correspondence
- At parents evenings
- In the school brochure
- Through our school website

The Children or young people:

Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

Attendance Procedures

Procedures when a child is absent:

In the event of a child being absent parents/carers are asked to contact school, on a daily basis before the school day begins. A telephone messaging system is in place to ensure this as easy as possible for parents.

Registers are taken via the SIMS system in the classroom. If a child is absent the teacher will record an N code next to their name or an I if the parent has informed them of a child's illness. Children arriving late should report to the school office with their parents and sign in via the INVENTORY system. The office staff update the SIMS register with those pupils who have signed in late.

The office staff check registers each morning as soon as possible, cross checking with the absence recording sheet and enter the correct codes for each child that is absent. A report is generated for those pupils not in school and procedures detailed in Appendix 1 are followed.

- It is expected that parents/carers provide an explanation on the first day of the pupil's absence. This can be by letter, telephone or personally at the office.
- This contact is recorded on the absence notification sheet in the school office.
- If no contact explaining the pupil's absence is made, the school will contact the primary contact by text message.
- After 3 days of unexplained absence, a letter will be sent home requesting a reason for absence.

- When the pupil returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- Should there be no reply on 3 different times and an abroad tone is picked up it will be assumed that the child has been taken on holiday. It will be up to the family to prove otherwise.

Referrals (cause for concern)

Identification & Referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher / office staff
- Concerns are passed to the Headteacher.
- Headteacher will contact parents/carers with letter 2
- Following the letter, there will be three weeks' monitoring of the pupil's attendance
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 3 may be sent and parents/carers can be invited in for a meeting
- Reinforce parental duty to ensure full school attendance
- If attendance has improved over the last three weeks, we may continue to monitor attendance
- We may, after three weeks' monitoring, inform parents/carers that we will refer to the Education Welfare Service.
- At this point we would refer to Education Welfare Service if attendance has not improved and we may feel a final warning letter appropriate.
- The referral to the Education Welfare Service will include the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parents/carers and a print out of the pupil's attendance certificate.

Requests for Leave of Absence

From September 2013, parents no longer have the right to request leave of absence for their children for an annual holiday. The amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations make clear that Head Teachers *may not* grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions to make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may request a leave of absence, these are circumstances which are rare, significant and unavoidable. Parents with exceptional circumstances **only** are asked to complete a leave of absence form and provide their reasons in writing, giving two weeks' notice.

Leave of absence will only be considered in **exceptional circumstances** and where attendance is at least at or above targets set by the school.

Families who take their child on holiday in term-time may be prosecuted. Fixed term penalties can be applied to each child and to each parent. Poor attendance and a history of holidays during term-time will be taken into account when considering prosecution.

Fixed Penalty notices

Parents and Carers who remove their children from school in term time may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. (From 1 September 2013 these will be for £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. Parents who fail to pay Fixed Penalty Notices may be prosecuted in court.)

Fixed penalty notices will be used not just for holidays in term time but also for general poor attendance. Our school uses the most recent request form when submitting requests for fixed penalty notices or warning letters. Requests for fixed penalty notices for holidays are to be submitted as and when the holidays occur rather than waiting for a half term or term.

Monitoring and Review

- The attendance and punctuality of all pupils is regularly monitored by the office staff, SENCO and Headteacher.
- Letters reminding parents about the government's target of 97% attendance and the target set for school by the governors of 96.5% are sent termly together with a record of their own child's attendance percentage.
- Pupils whose attendance drops below 85% are invited to attend an attendance panel meeting where an action plan is agreed to support the pupil's improved attendance. Future absences are then unauthorised unless doctors notes are provided.
- The attendance of persistent poor attenders is monitored regularly with further meetings set if attendance doesn't improve.
- When attendance does not improve despite all efforts by the Local Authority and school, the school would request the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice or warning letter. The Local Authority would set a more formal office meeting which may ultimately result in a fixed penalty fine or prosecution if the situation does not improve.

The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parents/carers need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.55am

There is a clear link between attendance and attainment; the more time a pupil spends in school the more likely they are to improve their opportunity to fulfil their full potential.

The Law states that:

A school has to take a register of all pupils first thing in the morning and sometime during the afternoon. The Government advice states that schools can keep the register open for up to 30 minutes, however this may be for a shorter period.

If a pupil arrives late to school but whilst the register is still open they are marked as late. If a pupil arrives at school after the register is closed, without a satisfactory reason, this may be classed as an unauthorised absence and may lead to prosecution.

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.