

# HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

GB x Annual

**September 2018**  
**Review September 2019**

*'WE CARE, WE SHARE, WE VALUE*

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children receive a full-time education by arriving at school on time, appropriately dressed and prepared to learn. We would like our pupils to attend school with a keen desire to learn and participate in school life. There is a legal requirement to ensure regular school attendance (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

### **Requirement**

In accordance with the national average, children in our school are expected to attend regularly and on time to a level of at least 96%, unless there are exceptional circumstances to take into consideration.

### **Registration**

Registration takes place promptly at 8:55 am. Immediately following registration, learning commences.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that your child is at school on time because being late impacts upon their learning in many ways. Children who arrive late miss vital information given out at the beginning of the morning, important practice of key skills, they will disrupt the lesson in progress and they will be embarrassed to arrive after their classmates are settled and learning. Your child will miss valuable learning and will not feel part of their whole class and whole school community.

### **Absence from School**

School acknowledges that pupils may well be absent occasionally due to illness, sudden unforeseen circumstances or with prior permission (obtained by a written request in advance) from the Headteacher.

### **Reporting Absence**

Parents and carers are responsible for notifying the school of the reason for absence on the first day by telephone, text or email. In the case of illness, an anticipated date for return should be given wherever possible.

### **Authorised Absence**

- Medical/dental appointments may be authorised if confirmed in person or by telephone. However non urgent appointments should be made outside of the school day. Wherever possible an appointment card from the Doctor/Dentist should be produced.
- All parental requests to take pupils out of school are considered on an individual basis and may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Certain factors must be taken into consideration before agreeing to such a request, eg frequency, duration, advance notice, child's attendance record, age and ability.

- Religious observance. Guidance sought from the Archdiocese.
- Absence may be authorised for purposes such as music or dance examinations, sporting activities and educational visits organised by other institutions.

### Family Holidays

Recently the Government amended key legislation relating specifically to authorisation of leave during term time. The Government has taken a firmer stance against parents who take their children out of school for a family holiday.

This policy is not to authorise family holidays during term-time.

Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent of a child in respect of a child being taken on holiday in term time. The school term dates are shared with parents well in advance.

Pupils have 13 weeks leave from school each year and holidays should be planned and taken then.

### Unauthorised Absence

Absence is considered to be unauthorised when.....

- Parents allow children to stay off school unnecessarily
- Children play truant
- Reasons for absences have not been satisfactorily explained
- **Children who arrive too late at school to receive a mark without an acceptable reason, ie after registers have closed 9.30am**
- Children are taken on holiday in term time.

### Procedures

Registers are marked in accordance with Pupil Registration Regulations 2007.

Pupils may be identified as a cause for concern, where:

- A pupil is known to be in reasonable health and his/her attendance falls below 96% in any half term
- There are noticeable trends in absence
- There is reason to believe the pupil may have been truanting
- Pupils are arriving at school after 9:30 am without an acceptable reason

### Persistent Absence

A Persistent Absentee (PA) is defined as a pupil who has missed 10% of school sessions (one day is classed as 2 sessions)

The DfE and OFSTED takes into account the number of pupils over the PA threshold when looking at schools performance regarding attendance.

### Rewards

We maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality in a number of ways by:

#### DAILY

- 1 Monster Point for being in each day (before registration closes 9.30am)
- 1 Monster Point for being in on time each day

#### WEEKLY

- Weekly class attendance % winners shared in assembly each Friday afternoon. Winning class has extra break time and winners recorded on a chart
- Class raffle – class teachers to share % attendance with class; all pupils 96%+ entered in to raffle to win a prize on Friday pm
- All Persistent Absentees (PAs- 10% absence) to be text and improvements, or not, noted. If no improvement in 2 weeks further action by EWO.
- Random 100% attendees to receive praise text/phone call – school office or SLT

#### HALF TERMLY

- Class with best attendance arrange coffee morning for parents in class

#### TERMLY

- Raffle – all 100% attendees in £50 draw; all 96%-99% in £25 draw

### Roles and Responsibilities in Improving Attendance

#### Parents

We expect parents to telephone school before 9:30 am on the first day of their child's absence to notify the school as the reason for the absence. **(Parents are responsible for informing the school of any change in telephone numbers and/or addresses).**

If parents wish to take their children out of school for whatever reason, a request must be made in writing in advance to the Headteacher. A written response will be duly issued, together with a certificate detailing the child's school attendance record.

Wherever possible, proof of medical/dental appointments must be provided before absence will be authorised. Parents are encouraged to arrange all such appointments outside school hours.

#### Attendance & Welfare Tracking

Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the school's office staff.

The school treats any unexplained absence from school very seriously – particularly from a safeguarding/child protection perspective. By 9:30 am, if a child is not in school and no reason has been provided, the Office staff will

telephone the parents/carers to ascertain the reason the child is absent. This is known as the 'First Day Response' system. If we do not receive a reason for absence from the parents or carer we will inform our School Attendance Consultant who may telephone or come to the house to ensure that the child is safe and well.

Where attendance and/or punctuality fail to improve to the required level, parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Concerns Meeting in school to discuss the issues impacting upon attendance. Action Plans will be offered to improve attendance. Parenting Contracts could also be offered to support parents.

A letter of concern will be issued to parents where their child's school attendance falls below 95%. If there is no immediate improvement in attendance, parents/carers will be invited to attend a school attendance meeting to discuss the matter in greater detail with our School's Attendance Consultant. In the event that a parent/carer either fails to attend this meeting or does not co-operate to improve their child's attendance, legal sanctions could be implemented.

## **IMPORTANT**

Legal Interventions to Secure a Child's Attendance at School:

Penalty Notices – The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers Local Authorities to issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence. The penalty, if paid within 21 days is £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. By paying the Penalty Notice the offence is discharged and parents do not receive a criminal conviction, should the fine not be paid the Penalty Notice is withdrawn and the matter placed in court. Parents would be summonsed to attend court and would receive a criminal conviction, in addition to whatever sanction is given in court, costs will also be incurred which could make this a very costly matter.

In the event of non-payment, legal intervention will be necessary under the following legislation:

Section 444 Education Act 1996 – Criminal Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Following a conviction, there are a range of sentencing options available to the Magistrates, including the imposition of 90 days imprisonment under Section 444(1A).

### Exclusion

In the unlikely event of an exclusion from school, this will be treated as authorised absence.

### Education Off-Site

Where a pupil is educated off site but remains on the school's registers, this will be recorded as present using the correct register coding, eg tuition taking place whilst a pupil is in hospital; inclusion bases.

## **PUNCTUALITY - PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES**

Effective teaching and learning requires all children to attend school punctually all day every day.

School doors open at 8.45am and children go straight to their class for early morning activities to do before registration.

Any child arriving after 8:55 am must do the following;

- Enter school through the main front entrance
- Enter their details and specific reason for late in the late book, which is located at the school office. (The pupil will receive a late mark) (L code)
- The school register is closed at 9:30am. **Any child arriving after 9:30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code)**

In compliance with Pupils' Registration Act an afternoon register is also taken following lunch time.

### Actions

Attendance and punctuality data are scrutinised and monitored on a daily basis in the school office. Where a child is persistently late (considered to be more than three times in any fortnight or any other patterns) a letter of concern and a copy of the child's attendance report will be sent to the parents/carers by the school office and this will be reported to our School's Attendance Consultant.

Late Gates will be carried out throughout the year; our School Attendance Consultant will challenge parents who habitually bring their children late to school.

Where a pupil arrives at school late (following the close of registration) on ten occasions over a ten week period, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

For cases approaching 20 unauthorised absences (combination of both lates and absent without authorisation), parents will be notified in writing informing them that in the event of no improvement, either a penalty notice will be issued or legal prosecution instigated.

When a pupil is late for school for an unacceptable reason, they will be expected to make the lost minutes of learning up at break time/lunchtime.

September 2018

