



# St. Aidan's Catholic Primary School

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## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

It is important that your child develops a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life. Saint Aidan's Catholic Primary School will work closely with other partners to ensure this policy is fulfilled including the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Attendance Officers and Manchester Local Authority.

### **Aim**

This policy aims to improve pupils' attendance at school and to ensure that absence from school only occurs when pupils have a genuine reason.

This policy aims to help parents understand the importance of regular school attendance to pupil's educational success and seeks to gain the support of parents in its implementation.

### **Legislative Framework**

Parent/guardian, schools and the Local Authority have legal responsibilities in ensuring that children attend school.

Parent/guardians of children of compulsory school age must ensure that their children receive an efficient and full-time education, either at school or otherwise (Education Act 1944 S.36).

Schools must maintain an attendance register in which each pupil is marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session (Pupils' Registration Regulation 1956).

Schools must publish attendance data showing the number of unauthorised absences in each term of the preceding school year, expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible attendances that term (The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991).

### **Primary School Attendance Procedure**

Procedures in this policy take into consideration statutory and non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education, (DfE) and LA.

### **Daily/Weekly Attendance Procedure**

- If your child is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian must ring school before **9.30am** to inform school of the reason for the absence.
- At **9.30am** school registers are checked for any absences for which we have no information.

- School staff will send a text message to the parent/guardian if there has been no contact with school regarding the absence. This will be followed up with a phone call if contact is not made regarding the absence.
- If a pupil has been absent and school have not been able to find out any reason for absence from the parent/guardian, a home visit will be made, at least within three days, sooner if there are concerns.

### ***Categorising absence***

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 require schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission i.e. truanting. In the terms of the legislation it is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent. Here at Saint Aidan's Catholic Primary School absence will only be authorised for the following reasons:-

- i. Pupil illness.
- ii. Pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observation by the religious group to which the pupil's parents belong.
- iii. Pupil is participating in an approved public performance/exam
- iv. Permission has been granted by the Headteacher through the Absence Request Procedure (see below).
- v. Pupil is absent following the death of a close family member.
- vi. Pupil has a medical or dental appointment, confirmed with an appointment card/letter. The child is expected to attend school prior to the appointment or return to school after the appointment - where possible medical or dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours.

### ***Monitoring Attendance***

As a school we monitor all areas of attendance and are required to provide the DfE and Education Social Work Service with our attendance data.

- School will send out a letter to parents each half term informing them of the attendance percentage for every class in school. Class attendance percentages for the year will also be sent out at the end of the school year.
- At the beginning of a new term the attendance data from the previous term is analysed.
- The parent/guardian of **all** pupils with less than **95%** attendance will be sent a letter and a printout of their child's attendance for that term.

### ***Persistent absentees***

Pupils whose attendance is less than **90%** are referred to as "Persistent Absentees" by the DfE and will be considered for referral to the Education Social Work Service. The Education Welfare Officer and school staff will then begin a programme of monitoring and support.

- Step 1 – parent/guardian, school staff and the Education Welfare Officer meet to discuss the absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- Step 2 – A letter summarising the discussion and a copy of the action plan is posted to the parent/guardian.
- Step 3 – After 6 weeks the attendance printout is reviewed by school staff and the Education Welfare Officer.
  - If the percentage has improved to above 90% half-termly monitoring is implemented.
  - If the percentage remains below 90% the parent/guardian is invited to a second meeting with school staff and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the absences where further, more formal, actions are outlined.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Absence for anything other than through illness or medical reasons during term time is actively discouraged.

Parents requesting time out of school for their child during term time should write a letter to the Head Teacher requesting the leave of absence and the reasons for taking time off school in term time.

The DfE has published new amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations which come into force from September 2013 and relate to Holidays in Term Time, Penalty Notices and Deletions from the school register.

The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will define 'exceptional circumstances' and also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Leave of absence will not be granted during September to ensure that pupils have a settled start to the new year nor in May/June when all classes have their annual assessments.

### **Penalty Notices**

Failure to return your child on the agreed date could result in a penalty fine of £60 (per parent, per child) being issued and your child losing their place at school.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out of the beginning of each school day. This time can be important because information is often given out which allows for the smooth running of the day and helps pupils feel part of the school community.

- The school opens at 9 a.m. and pupils should be in school at this time. It is essential that your child is ready for registration at 9.10 a.m. prompt. All entrances with the exception of the main school entrance are closed at 9.10 a.m.
- Pupils arriving after this time will have to report to the office where their names will be entered on the sign in system for safety reasons and monitoring of attendance.
- The online system is monitored to identify the pupils who are persistently late.
- If pupils are consistently late for school then a letter is sent to parent/guardian to inform them and request that this improves.

- If no improvement is made then the parent/guardian is invited to a meeting with school staff to discuss the situation and offer support if appropriate.

**Class Registers:**

The class teacher should take the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. School uses Teachers Arbor as their registration management system.

Staff should indicate: if the pupil is present or if the pupil is absent.