



**ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

"I called you by your name, you are mine." Isaiah 43

The mission of our school is to support and further the teachings of Christ and His Church.

We welcome and embrace individuals of all abilities and cultural backgrounds.

We aim to enhance and celebrate their moral, physical, social and emotional development, so that they may reach their full potential in an atmosphere of stability, care and respect.

We believe that education is for all and in partnership with parents, carers, children and the wider Catholic community: we will strive and succeed in a wholly inclusive setting.

Date issued: January 2018

Date to be reviewed: January 2020

St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Policy on Pupil School Attendance

AAP – Attendance Advisory Practitioner

SIMS – School Information Management System

DFE – Department for Education

Introduction:

Regular attendance and punctuality at school is important to secure academic achievement. The Law says that all children between the ages of 5 and 16 must attend school regularly and stay in school.

Parents and carers are responsible for making sure this happens. Irregular attendance will undermine a child's educational progress. There is also evidence which links non-attendance at school with criminality and anti-social behaviour in later life.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school.
- Clarify the role of parents/carers.

The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller education, Health, Social Services etc.)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Develop incentives for good attendance.
- Share good practice with other schools.
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the **first** day of absence by 9.00am, if this is not received the school will ring the parents as a precaution, in case the parent is unaware the child is not in school.
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to prepare for the child's return.
- Provide a letter indicating attendance to the dentist, doctor or optician **before** the arranged appointment, as far as possible these should be made outside of school hours, unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, absence following the death of a close member of the family, attendance of an interview or examination, participation in a regional or national sporting event.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

Examples of absences which will be not be authorised:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill.
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill.
- The parent cannot get the child to school.
- The child is taken on a shopping trip.
- The child is absent due to birthday treat/family treat.
- A child is absent due to family work patterns.
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- The family have overslept.
- The parents have forgotten the term dates.
- There is a problem with the uniform.

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All parents are informed of the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Reward classes, children and groups of children for high attendance.
- Maintain up to date records within SIMS.
- The school has a breakfast club which is open (from 7.45am) to any pupil whose parents wish to send them to attend. The club offers a healthy choice of breakfast including cereal, toast, fruit and drinks and a range of educational activities and games.
- Children in each year group with 100% attendance at the end of each term will be entered into a raffle.
- Liaise with the AAP during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.

Requests for Leave of absence

Permission for leave of absence in term time may only be granted where:

- Attendance of the pupil is more than 96% in the last and current academic years.
- The absence does not occur during the school's assessment times and SAT's and also during the preparation towards these tests and examinations.
- A formal application is made on the prescribed forms (available from the school office) with an accompanying letter explaining the **exceptional** circumstances. The Headteacher may request a meeting to discuss the application with the parent.
- Reasonable notice must be given: at least 2 weeks' notice which will allow preparation of any work by the class teacher.
- Retrospective permission will not be granted if sought.

From September 2013, the Department for Education (DfE) amended the regulations governing requests for holidays in term time. Amendments to the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Head Teachers MAY NOT grant any holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Governors will only consider requests for absence if the child concerned has 96% attendance in the last academic year, and current academic year. Requests for children who have less than 96% attendance will not be considered and therefore any subsequent absence will be unauthorised.

Parents are asked to support the school with its aims and not to take their children out of school during term time.

Upon receipt of this form, an appointment may be arranged with the Headteacher and a decision will be made. Parents are asked to reflect on the possible impact that this time out of school will have on

their child's learning when requesting such authorisation. Please also bear in mind that significant periods of absence can impact on a child's social relationships and affect friendship patterns.

Equal opportunities

The school will consider religious and cultural diversity when using discretion to authorise absence for religious holidays. A pupil absence may be authorised on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the relevant religious body. Parents/carers should give 2 weeks notice of these days.

For requests which involve a family holiday abroad each case will be considered on its merits. A pupil may have family in another country and need to attend an important ceremony such as the funeral of a grandparent. It is important therefore that the Headteacher exercises discretion. It will be made clear that if a pupil does not return after the agreed time then further absence will be unauthorised and if they have not returned within 2 weeks of the expected return date the pupil may be taken off roll and the parents/carers need to reapply for a school place.

Managing Absences and Lateness

- Issuing and checking registers on a weekly basis, ensuring parental letters informing about absence and lateness are brought in.
- Lateness is recorded on SIMS
- The AAP will check the registers on a termly basis for persistent absence or lateness.
- A letter will be sent to warn the parents/carers that the school is concerned and has referred the matter to the AAP. This letter will also notify the parents of the sanctions which could be applied if attendance does not improve.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and the DFE.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment. When a child returns from a period of absence due to sickness, a note must be provided. This will be noted in the register.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will request parents to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

The school will telephone the child's home to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school on the first day of absence.

If a child has been absent without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the absence will be marked unauthorised and the school will inform the AAP about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance falls below 85% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the AAP during one of their regular visits.

Sanctions

Where absences are unauthorised...

- Referral can be made to the AAP, where legal sanctions may be applied, in the usual manner.
- Where 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) occur, the school, at the Headteacher's discretion, can apply to the LA for the issuing of a Penalty Notice*. This application would be made after consultation with the AAP.
- The offence of non-school attendance is absolute, and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

***£120 fine for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 28 days
£60 fine for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 21 days**

Failure to pay will result in a summons to the magistrate court

Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.55am and the register will be taken at 9.00am. Children arriving at school after this time should report to the school office; children will be marked in the register as late. Children arriving after 9.05am will be registered as an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know as soon as possible.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply with them. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education, but also that of others in the class.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Medical appointments

Medical appointments should not be made during school hours if at all possible. Should this be absolutely necessary then parents must sign their child/ren out and back in again. A log is kept for this purpose. Parents should come to the office, where a member of staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

This policy complies with the current regulations, has been approved by the Governing Body.

Signed:.....
Headteacher