



St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Policy: Attendance and Punctuality



OVERVIEW

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards learning. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

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 also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence

- 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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- 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.

If a child is absent: Parents must contact the school before 8.55am to report any absence.

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office. In line with our safeguarding procedures, the administration staff will make every effort to contact a parent or family member to establish the reason for absence.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. A template is found on the school website.
- If a child is absent due to an unavoidable appointment a copy of the medical appointment letter must be sent to the school prior to the day of 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 guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. Staff should

be vigilant of any changes in attendance patterns as this can be an indicator as a Safeguarding issue.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will not be granted.
- Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods and leave for holidays will not be authorised by the school.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Educational Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The governors, supported by the LEA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

- All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year. A trophy will be awarded to the class with the highest attendance each week. The class with the best attendance each term will be rewarded by allowing them to wear non – uniform for one day. These achievements will be displayed in the school hall.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

- The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LEA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- Administration staff will be responsible for monitoring attendance, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If a class teacher has a concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Revised and adopted by the Governing Body in November 2016