

St Nicholas Catholic Primary School



Policy – 4.08 Attendance Policy May 2022

Rationale

- Regular attendance has always been important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Pupils need to attend school if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages. It can place children at risk and in some cases can result in some pupils being drawn into patterns of inappropriate or criminal behaviour.
- Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a parent, an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age is required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. The school is responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.
- Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore, they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in the children a respect for education – and for those who deliver it. Parents should also impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home.

The purpose of this document is to state clearly the school's policy and procedures for dealing with absence and to make clear the responsibilities of the parent and school in maximising attendance.

Lateness

- Registration takes place from 8.45 – 8.55am. If a child arrives at school after 8.45 but before 8.55am they will be marked as 'L' for late. This will not constitute an absence - but a late arrival.
- When a child arrives at school after 8.55am, they should report to the office and the child, or their representative, should sign the child in using the electronic system at the front desk. The child will be marked with a 'U' on the register indicating an unauthorised absence.
- Punctuality will be monitored on a half termly basis. If there is a concern, the school will write to the child's parents or carers to bring this to their attention.

Authorised Absence

Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time.

Permission from the Head of School must be sought in advance using the S2 absence request form. The form will be returned to parents informing them of the Head of School's decision prior to the absence.

There are special occasions for which the school will determine whether an absence is authorised or not. Only exceptional occasions should be sanctioned. A birthday party would not normally be considered to be exceptional, whilst a pupil attending an older brother's/sister's graduation might be granted leave of absence. Other examples of special occasions that are likely to be authorised are those due to family bereavement, days of religious observance, and external examinations such as ballet or music.

In considering individual cases, the Head of School will have regard to the following:

- The nature of the event
- Its frequency (i.e. is it a one-off or likely to be a regular pattern)
- The overall attendance pattern of the child

Medical Appointments

Although the school will generally authorise medical appointments where evidence of the appointment is provided. We request that parents try to make these appointments outside school hours where possible. We expect children to attend school both before and after the appointment.

Unauthorised Absence

If the school refuses a parent's request but the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may make the child's parents liable to a penalty notice for **each** child and payable by **each** parent/carer e.g both mum and dad. Penalties are issued by the Education Welfare Officer.

Reporting an unplanned absence

It is the parent or carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of a child's unplanned absence and every other day after that. Parents should telephone the school first thing in the morning (before 8.30am if possible) or send a note along with another child.

If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days due to illness, parents and carers will need to provide evidence of the child's attendance at a GP surgery. If this is not possible any

further absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may make parents and carers liable for legal action.

Unplanned absences that occur on the next consecutive school day following an unauthorised absence, will be automatically recorded as unauthorised, unless medical evidence is provided.

Monitoring Attendance

All pupils' attendance below 95% is monitored and tracked on a half termly basis by the school, in order to identify persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees.

Attendance letter 1 will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 95%.

Attendance letter 2 will be sent after letter 1, this could be later in the same academic year if attendance has not improved, inviting parents/carers into a meeting with the SENCo.

Attendance letter 3/ Medical Evidence letter will be sent if parents do not attend the meeting with the Welfare and Attendance Officer and/or if attendance continues to fall due to illness.

If, at any time, a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 days) within any 6 months period, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority to consider legal options available. Legal options include: Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, School Attendance Orders and Prosecution. Please see the Local Authority website for further details.

Children with persistent absence will be raised for discussion within the school's safeguarding system and their parents/carers will be invited to attend a discussion with the DSL / Head of School. The involvement of other agencies will also be requested if required. In some cases parents and carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for all further absences of the child for the duration of the academic year.

Parents and carers of any child with more than 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in an academic year will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer EWO.

The Headteacher will periodically issue information and news about attendance, including the attendance target for the forthcoming year. Children with 100% attendance each term will be celebrated and presented with a certificate signed by the Head of School

Whole school attendance reports will be shared with the governing body once a term.

Living and Learning in Spirit and in Truth

Signed:

Chair of Committee