



St Edwards Catholic Primary School **Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Introduction

It is important that you and your child develop 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.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in school work.

St Edward's Catholic Primary School will work closely with other partners to ensure this policy is fulfilled and including the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Social Work Service

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 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 in to 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 **9.15am** to inform school of the reason for the absence.
- At **9.30am** the school registers will close. School registers are checked for any absences for which we have no information.
- School staff will make a call to the parent/guardian if there has been no contact with school 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. truancing. In the terms of the legislation it is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent. Here at St Edward'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.
- 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.
- The parent/guardian of **all** pupils with less than **90%** attendance will be sent a letter and printout of their child's attendance for that term. In addition the monitoring programme for pupils with attendance percentages between 90% and 80% will be half termly rather than termly.

Persistent absentees

Pupils whose attendance is less than **85%** 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 80% half-termly monitoring is implemented.
 - If the percentage remains below 80% 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

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

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 8.50 a.m. and pupils should be in the playground ready to be collected by the teacher. It is essential that your child is ready for registration at 8.50 a.m. prompt.
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- If pupils are late for school twice in a week 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 or Cover Supervisor should take the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. School uses SIMs as their registration management system.

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

The register should be saved immediately and admin staff will convert the marks via SIMs.net to ascertain all pupils whereabouts.

