



SAINT JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, WALLASEY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our School Mission Statement

Together in faith we nurture, encourage and inspire each other to achieve excellence and become all that Jesus calls us to be

Introduction

For children at our school to gain the greatest benefit from education it is essential that they attend school regularly and punctually. Poor attendance (and punctuality) not only impacts on a child's progress and achievement but also on their self-esteem and well-being. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. The habit of being a regular, punctual attender at school will stand a child in good stead for the future, particularly in the world of work.

Parents are responsible for ensuring full time, regular and punctual attendance of their compulsory school-aged child. Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential for children to maximise their educational opportunities.

Regular attendance has been defined (by the Supreme Court, 6th April 2017) to mean "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". Our school has a minimum expectation of 97% attendance over an academic school year.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their 5th birthday.

- If they turn 5 between 1 Jan and 31 Mar they are of compulsory school age on 31 March.
- If they turn 5 between 1 Apr and 31st Aug then they are of compulsory school age on 31st August.
- If they turn 5 between 1 Sept and 31 Dec then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

School attendance is given a high profile throughout the school because we know how important it is. It is discussed at all school assemblies, parents' evenings, staff meetings and governors' meetings. It is also included in all school reports and newsletters. We also provide visual displays highlighting the importance of good attendance and punctuality in prominent positions throughout the school. Our school reward systems promote and celebrate the achievement of high levels of attendance and encourage pupils to become Attendance Ambassadors.

Our Aims:

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

Good attendance is important because:

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day;
- attend school punctually;
- attend appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school;
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school;
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Reluctance to go to School

If a child feels anxious about going to school, parents should let school know so that we can help. Parents should discuss any concerns with their class teacher, the school pastoral support leader or the Headteacher. School will work closely with parents and their child to offer support to address any concerns or anxieties their child has and help maintain their attendance.

Reward Systems

Our school has a system of rewards for children whose attendance is good or excellent. These include individual certificates and prizes for good and excellent attendance and class rewards too. Pupils whose attendance is 97% or above in a year become Attendance Ambassadors

Attendance Information

- School year = 190 days plus 5 days Teacher Training Days.
- Minimum expected attendance is 97%.
- Any child with attendance below 90% is classed as persistently absent.

The table below helps to illustrate the impact of poor attendance

Percentage Attendance	Number of school days missed	Average number of lessons missed
95%	1 week & 4.5 days	58
90%	3 weeks & 4 days	76
85%	5 weeks & 3.5 days	114
80%	7 weeks & 3 days (Over 1/2 a term)	152
75%	9 weeks & 2.5 days	190
70%	11 weeks & 2 days (One term missed!)	228

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9.00am. Children arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late. All registers will remain open until 9.30am and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at: 1.00 pm for KS1 1.30pm for KS2.
The register will close at: 1.15 pm for KS1 1.45pm for KS2.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Fixed Penalty notices will be issued to parents if their child arrives late after the registers are closed (using code U) on 10 or more separate occasions in any one term

First Day Absence

- If a child is absent from school, for whatever reason it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school by 9.15am on the first day of absence by telephoning 0151 638 3919; an answerphone is available for parents to leave a message before the office is open.
- If a child is absent and the school hasn't been notified, an automatic text message via 'teacher 2 parent' will be sent requesting a reason for absence.
- If the school is satisfied with the reason provided for the pupil absence it will be recorded in the register as an authorised absence. If no reason is provided or the school is not satisfied with the reason given it will be recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents can not authorise a child's absence from school, it is the schools decision to authorise/unauthorise absences.

Medical Appointments

Wherever possible medical appointments should be arranged outside the school day

Continued(or sporadic) ongoing absences

Action Plans

If a child's attendance becomes a source of concern school will write to the parent and they will be invited to a meeting or school attendance panel. The meeting will give an opportunity to discuss any concerns and to agree an Action Plan or Parenting Contract to support the family.

Persistent Absence

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they will be defined by the Department of Education as Persistently Absent. At this level their progress and development may be significantly impaired. The case will be referred to the Education Social Worker who would contact the family and offer to visit them at home to address any concerns and offer support.

Parent's legal responsibilities

The Education Act [1996] Section 444 requires parents to ensure that their children receive full-time education which suits their needs. Parents who fail in this duty may be prosecuted via the courts and fined up to £2 500 or, in some cases, imprisoned. The Anti Social Behaviour Act [2003] Section 23 also indicates parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child's absence from school is unauthorised.

Holidays in term time

Parents are discouraged from withdrawing their children from school in term time for family holidays because this will impact on their progress. The Headteacher may only authorise holidays in term time in exceptional circumstances. Any requests from parents for leave in term time must be completed using the 'Application for Leave during Term Time' form, a copy of which is available in the school office, and returned to the Headteacher. Parents who believe their circumstances are exceptional should clarify their reasons to assist the Headteacher's decision.

Parents who withdraw their children for unauthorised holidays in term time will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice and may incur a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days & £120 per parent per child if paid between 22 & 28 days. Parents who fail to pay Fixed Penalty Notices may be prosecuted in court.

Circumstances When Penalty Notices Will Be Issued

Penalty Notices will be issued by Wirral Council where any of the following occur:

(A) The child has had 10 or more sessions of absence in a period of no more than one term or two half terms and meets the terms of prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and the Local Authority has previously issued a warning letter giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a 15 day period.

(B) The child has 10 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence in term time and the Headteacher has advised the parent in writing that the leave of absence does not constitute the Headteachers view of an exceptional circumstance.

(C) The child has taken leave of absence in term time without parents requesting authorisation from the school.

(D) The child arrives late after the registers are closed (using code U) on 10 or more separate occasions in any one term

(E) An exclusion has taken place and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

In b), c) and d) subsequent unauthorised absence may not be subject to a penalty notice as the parent will be made aware that to repeat this would be committing an offence and the Local Authority may prosecute for a repeat offence.

3.2 Penalty Notices will be issued to each parent for each child. The exception to this would be where a parent has taken a child on unauthorised leave of absence without the consent of the other parent.

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