

St. Paul's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Attendance

St. Paul's conveys its positive regard for attendance to governors, parents, pupils and teachers. Children quickly pick up the message that their presence is important. The twice-daily requirement to register pupils should be perceived as an opportunity to receive pupils from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- ◆ Authorised (where the school accepts the reason for pupil absence)
- ◆ Unauthorised (where the school will not approve, or does not know, the reason for absence)

If a child is absent, parents should inform the school on the first day of absence stating the reason. A note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. Authorisation of any absence is at the school's discretion.

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers then the school will contact home by telephone on the initial day. This is done through an automated system called "Truancy Call" which rings the contact numbers hourly until a response is received. If absence is unexplained for 3 days, the school may attempt to make personal contact with the parent.

Children with an attendance level of 95% or above, are rewarded at the end of each term.

95%+ attendance Children receive a certificate recording their actual achievement

100% attendance Children receive a special 'gold standard' certificate in recognition of their achievement

Children who have significantly improved attendance or punctuality receive a letter from the Headteacher praising their efforts.

Weekly award stickers for attendance and punctuality are given to individual children who have been "In school and on time all week".

At the weekly Awards Assembly the class with the best attendance for the previous week is presented with a certificate. If a class achieves 100% attendance for the week they receive a treat and the attendance trophy.

Attendance is reported to Governors at Curriculum Committee meetings, where progress towards the whole school attendance target is reviewed, and at Full Governor's meetings.

The Governor's working party for attendance meet with the attendance officer, monthly to review progress and patterns in attendance and punctuality.

Completing the register

The marking of registers is important and incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:

- ◆ Registers provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils and are required as evidence of such. They are a legal document.
- ◆ Attendance levels form part of a child's school report.
- ◆ Health and Safety requires school to have an accurate record of all pupils on the premises at all times.

Registers should be completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and should be returned to the office by 9.10 a.m. and 1.10 p.m. respectively. At no time should registers remain in classrooms during teaching sessions.

All children arriving late must report to the office to ensure that they are marked present on the register. Registers are closed at 9.30 am and 1.30 pm respectively and pupils arriving after this time will be marked absent not late.

Late/Attendance Concerns

If a class teacher is concerned by a significant numbers of 'lates' for a particular child or by a sporadic attendance pattern, the Headteacher or Attendance Officer should be informed.

Holidays During Term Time

"The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

*Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013."*

*"The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.*

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted."(Department for Education website, September 2013)

The Governing Body of St. Paul's Catholic Primary School do not authorise any pupil holidays during term time. This decision was reached in order to help the school improve the annual attendance percentage and to contribute to the raising of standards and levels of achievement.

However, parents requiring 'leave of absence' during term time should complete an 'Application for leave of Absence' form which is available from school. This should be returned to school well in advance of the proposed leave and before committing to any expense.

Leave of Absence Applications

It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to obtain permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take any leave in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice (see below) if they do so without prior arrangement with the Headteacher. Legislation only allows a Headteacher to authorise such leave in exceptional circumstances.

A parent wishing to apply for leave from school should complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form and return it to the school for consideration, well in advance of the proposed leave and before committing to any expense. Upon receipt of a request, the Headteacher will make a decision as to whether to authorise the absence, being mindful of government legislations and Local Authority guidance. By definition, exceptional circumstances do not occur regularly.

Where school has concerns about the leave request, the Headteacher or their representative will arrange to meet with parents to discuss the application. Some of the factors which may be taken into account by school when considering a request for leave (even in exceptional circumstances) include:

- Will leave at this point in time be detrimental to the pupil's education?
- Will he/she miss any national tests or examinations?
- Is his/her attendance a cause for concern?
- Is the proposed absence during the month of September or any other transition period?
- Has he/she already had leave during term time this year?
- Did he/she have leave of absence during term time in the previous school year(s)?
- Does he/she have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?
- Will the child's absence have a detrimental effect on additional provision that may have been put in place by the school to cater for the child's individual needs?

These points are by no means exhaustive and are listed to enable parents to gauge the likelihood of an application being accepted.

A pupil's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away, but also they are not prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement.

Fixed Penalty Notice

"The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their

excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions". (Department for Education website, September 2013)

The school has adopted the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme as part of the Attendance Policy. In an instance of a child being taken out of school for an unauthorised holiday during term time, this process will commence and parents may be fined £60.00 each (if paid within 21 days) or £120.00 each (if paid after 21 days but within 28 days). Fixed Penalty Notices may also be issued for general poor attendance. For full details, please refer to Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Children & Young People's Department – Protocol for Fixed Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence and Exclusions.

Lateness

School begins at 8.55 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at that time.

Any child who arrives after 8.55 a.m. must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school office. The child will be recorded as 'late' and they will then be sent to their classroom.

Pupils who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents will be contacted and may be invited to attend school to discuss the detrimental effect of lateness on their child's education. If punctuality does not improve, the Headteacher will refer the matter to the ESW for advice and further action if necessary.

If absence or lateness continues

- ◆ The school will discuss with the Educational Social Worker (ESW) any child whose attendance falls below 90% and any child who is regularly late for school.
- ◆ The Educational Social Worker may contact parents whose child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern in order to work with parents to resolve the situation. The Headteacher and Attendance Officer meet fortnightly with the ESW to review attendance issues.
- ◆ During fortnightly review meetings, it will be decided whether parents should be invited in to school to a Pupil Attendance Panel meeting. The panel consists of the Headteacher, ESW, Attendance Officer, School Nurse and the Attendance Governor. This meeting gives parents the opportunity to seek help and support if they have circumstances which are causing their child to be absent from school on a regular basis. The attendance of these children will continue to be monitored.
- ◆ In rare cases where patterns of punctuality or attendance do not improve, following intervention from agencies including Pupil Attendance Panel, ESW and the School Nurse (as appropriate to the case), a decision may be taken to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or follow a legal course of action.

Further Initiatives

The school minibus is used to reward whole classes with 100% attendance.

All Family Learning courses will emphasise the importance of attendance and punctuality for pupils.

All parent's meetings will include information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Termly reminders of the school's commitment to promoting good attendance and punctuality will be sent home to parents in the Newsletter

Teaching staff take every opportunity to promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality.

Dentist and Doctor's appointments are discouraged in school time. Where this is unavoidable, parents are asked to produce appointment cards for dental or medical appointments and a copy is kept on the child's records.

The first day of a new term is seen as an opportunity to reinforce the message that school is a fun place in which to learn- "Miss school-miss out".