

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School
Attendance Policy.

Aim

To ensure that all children receive their full educational entitlement and to enable all children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, St Stephen's Catholic Primary School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Parental and School Responsibilities

In relation to the 1996 Educational Act, parents have a legal obligation to ensure that all children:-

- ❖ Attend school
- ❖ Are punctual
- ❖ Are prepared to work hard
- ❖ Complete any homework set
- ❖ Bring to school the correct equipment where appropriate

In respect of attendance, the school's responsibilities include:-

- ❖ The effective monitoring of attendance and to liaise with parents should children be absent from school without explanation
- ❖ To provide a safe, secure environment and education of high quality
- ❖ To support pupils who find it hard to meet the school's expectations on attendance
- ❖ To work closely with the LA's Attendance Office with parents of pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory - below Government Target of 85%

Absence

Should a child be absent from school for whatever reason, the following procedures should be followed:-

- ❖ Parents or carers should telephone school on the first day of the absence preferably before 9.00 a.m. detailing the reason for the child's absence, together with an intended date of return.
- ❖ A letter should be sent into school confirming the absence, the dates and reason when the child returns to school.
- ❖ If there is a confidential reason why any child is absent, it is important to speak with the head teacher as soon as possible.

Types of Absence

Absence is categorised into two types authorised and unauthorised. It is the school's responsibility to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Schools are not obliged to accept parental explanations of absence if they do not believe they are genuine or account for too much absence. On occasion, school may ask for evidence if an absence is to be authorised i.e. a medical certificate or a doctor's note.

Authorised absences can include:-

- sickness and medical conditions,
- doctors/hospital appointments,
- appointments with other outside agencies such as speech therapy, opticians, dentists, hearing specialists etc.
- certain family events such as weddings, births, bereavements, funerals etc. which can be deemed as exceptional circumstances
- other exceptional circumstances in consultation with the head teacher

Holidays During Term Time

Parents do **not** have a right to withdraw their children from school to go on holiday. Following recent guidance, schools should not authorise holidays during term time. Any holidays taken during term time will be classed as unauthorised. It is important that school is informed regarding any holiday absence and its duration. School will work with the local authority's attendance team to issue fixed penalty fines for term time holiday absence when appropriate.

Lateness

It is a parental responsibility to ensure that children arrive at school on time. The school opens its doors to pupils at 8.45 a.m. each day so that children can come straight into their classrooms to get themselves ready for the day ahead. School staff are already in the classrooms with a morning maths and reading activities ready for the children. The school day commences at 8.55 a.m. when the register is taken. The registers are collected at 9.10 a.m. Any children arriving at school after 9.10 a.m. must report to the school office so that they can be allocated their mark. Children who arrive at school more than 30 minutes late without a satisfactory explanation will be recorded as an absent without authorisation for the whole of that session.

The Follow up of Absence

In order to maintain acceptable levels of attendance, absences must be followed up routinely and consistently. School will operate a first day response to absence when school has not been contacted by parents/carers to report the absence of a child. Parents/carers will be contacted by school - headteacher/administration staff/support staff - should children not arrive at school. Additionally, this measure will ensure the safety and whereabouts of children.

Unacceptable lateness or absence will result in school writing to parents or to make a visit to the home, should parents/carers not be contactable.

The school follows strictly the guidance provided both the Local Authority and the Government in pursuit of good attendance and will support the Local Authority should prosecutions be necessary.

School Rewards System

- ✓ Weekly class attendances are published on the newsletter.
- ✓ Weekly attendance draw for 100% attendance and punctuality for each class
- ✓ 100% attendance class celebration treat
- ✓ Half Termly - All children who have had 100% attendance and punctuality for the whole term will be presented with a special attendance certificate.
- ✓ Termly - All children who have been in school on time and have 100% attendance will be rewarded with a prize or treat.
- ✓ Termly class attendance prizes for the highest attendance in each keystage
- ✓ Annually - At the end of each academic year, children who have achieved 100% will receive recognition and a reward at the end of year Prize Assembly. These children will also receive recognition from the Local Authority.

Children Missing in Education

The school carefully follows the guidance from the DFE issued September 2016. School will adopt the Local Authority Policy once it has been issued. St Stephen's recognizes its statutory responsibilities actions should a child go missing.

Communication

The School Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually. The key issues contained in the policy will be communicated to parents and carers at the start of each academic year. Attendance information and responsibilities are included in the Home School Agreement and the School Prospectus. Attendance and punctuality information are shared with the full governing body on a termly basis.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to sustain improvement, attendance, absence and punctuality are monitored on a weekly basis in terms of data and information. Policy and practice are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure a positive impact.

Reviewed:- September 2017

Review Date:- September 2018