



ST ETHELBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Attendance/Holiday in Term Time Policy 2015

Date of Review: November 2015
Date of Next Review:

Attendance / Holiday in Term Time Policy

The governing body of St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery believe that every child, (Article 28 of the United Convention of the Rights of every Child) has the right to attend school. In accordance with this right is the expectation that parents will ensure that their children attend school according to the term dates. The school will comply with legislation in offering the correct number of days for attendance. St., Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery believes that all children must be afforded their rights as it is in keeping with its mission of:

“Learning, Achieving and Growing together with Jesus”

Purpose:

To promote excellent attendance that will contribute to maintaining a positive school environment and secure a climate for effective learning and achievement in all areas

Objectives:

1. To promote 100% attendance.
2. To share the responsibility for promoting the school's attendance amongst everyone in the school and the wider community.
3. To reward pupils and celebrate the success of pupils who achieve excellent, good or improved attendance.
4. To challenge student attendance where it falls below 95% ensuring appropriate levels of support and intervention are maintained.
5. To engage with external agencies to monitor, support and intervene where attendance is a cause for concern.

Key Information for Parents:

1. We expect pupils to arrive at school on time and to be collected on time.
2. We expect parents to inform the school if a child is going to be absent and provide an explanation. It is reasonable for members of staff to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality and on occasions request evidence to support the reason for absence or proof for exceptional leave.
3. Pupils can be removed from the school roll if absent for more than 10 days without appropriate authorisation being granted or evidence being provided.
4. **Unauthorised absence:** is absence without permission from the Headteacher, this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences e.g. term time holiday or a birthday celebration.
5. **Holidays in Term Time:** Under new Department for Education guidelines, special leave can no longer be sanctioned by the Head Teacher. Leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. ***Family holidays do not count as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.***

Why attendance matters:

1. If pupils are to achieve their potential, good attendance and punctuality are vital.
2. The link between attendance and achievement is well documented.
3. We want all our pupils to achieve the very best that they can, to develop the whole person and be the 'best they can be'

Punctuality:

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their son/daughter arrives at school punctually.

What Parents/carers can do:

- Ensure pupils arrive on time each day, well equipped and in a fit state to learn. School starts at 8.50 a.m. for all pupils in Reception, KS1 and KS2.
- Registers close at 9.15 a.m. at which point your child will be given an unauthorised absence mark if they are not in school and have not given a valid reason.
- Take an interest in the education of their son/ daughter by talking to them about the school and by attending school events.
- If you are aware that your child will be absent from school – please phone the school office on 01753 522048
- If a child must attend a medical or dental appointment during teaching time then appointment cards must be shared before the event.
- Inform the school if there is a problem that may affect your child's attendance e.g. bereavement

If absences are unexplained a telephone call home will be made on the day of the absence and a reason for the absence sought. If contact is not made, a follow up call will be made.

It is not permitted to start a term late or finish a term early. Term dates are sent out at the beginning of an academic year to remind parents of the dates children are required to be in school.

Examples of how days missed effects % attendance rating :

ATTENDANCE: Days missed over a school year:

100% attendance	-	0 Days missed
95% attendance	-	10 Days missed
90% attendance	-	20 Days missed
85% attendance	-	30 Days missed

Responsibilities:

The Education Act 2004 states that all children of compulsory school age (five to sixteen) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure their son/daughter attends regularly.

St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery welcomes the active support of parents/carers. The school seeks to develop an effective partnership between home and the school based on mutual understanding and trust. However, in some circumstances when non-attendance is below an acceptable level the school will liaise with the Attendance Officer and if necessary seek legal sanctions for non-school attendance.

Safeguarding

The school has a statutory responsibility to safeguard the welfare and safety of its pupils. Monitoring attendance and/or patterns of attendance is part of this safeguarding responsibility.

Parental Prosecution:

When non attendance is below an acceptable level and no reasonable explanation has been given parents may be required to appear at the Magistrates Court. This may result in the parent/s receiving a Parenting Order or a fine of up to £1200 for each parent.

Education Supervision Order:

This is a strategy used to work in partnership with families and schools, and sometimes other agencies to bring about a return to regular schooling. The application is heard by the Family Proceedings Court where Magistrates have the power to grant the Order.

REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

Authorised absence: is absence with permission from the Headteacher; this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Medical and dental appointments, where possible should be made for after school or during school holidays. The school understands that this isn't always possible, however, pupils should attend school prior to or following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence. Only half a day will be authorised for these appointments.

Unauthorised absence: is absence without permission from the Headteacher, this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences e.g. term time holiday or a birthday celebration.

Holidays in Term Time:

Under new Department for Education guidelines, special leave can no longer be sanctioned by the Head Teacher. Leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. **Family holidays do not count as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.**

Please consider the following if you are thinking of taking a holiday during term time.

- During one week's absence your child will miss approximately 25 hours of their education.
- If your child has two weeks holiday during term time and one week of illness during the school year they will miss 7.7% of their education that year. If this pattern is repeated throughout their school life they would miss 33 weeks of their education.
- Research shows that children taken out of school may never catch up on work they have missed. It may affect their exam results and the progress they make at school.
- Every school day counts if your child is to maximise their potential.

Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will be notified to the local authority and parents/carers a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for each child concerned..

Time out of school during term time will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances e.g. a bereavement – every case will be dealt with on a personal basis and will be dependent on the child's previous attendance record as well as the reason for absence.

Registration and Lateness

1. All registers are marked at the beginning of morning and afternoon school. This should be the first task of the morning and afternoon sessions for all class teachers.
2. Registers are marked electronically by the class teacher using a system called ClassMark. The school office receives an electronic copy of the register once it has been completed by the class teacher.
3. If a pupil arrives at school late then pupil (and accompanying parent) should come to the school office. The parent must sign their child in electronically using the InVentry system at the front desk and provide a reason for the lateness. The InVentry system also records the number of minutes late a pupil has arrived. Older pupils who are not accompanied by a parent should go to the school office and sign themselves in electronically. Office staff will be there to support parents/pupils with signing in.
4. Training sessions for staff in the correct marking of registers is part of the induction process. The school Office Manager is responsible for this training.
5. Registers are inspected by the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority and a report given to the Office Manager and individual teachers. Any necessary improvements are expected to be monitored by the Office Manager. A regular report should be given to the Head Teacher

Letters to/meetings with parents regarding lateness

1. School office staff remind parents/pupils arriving late regarding the importance of arriving at school on time.
2. The school admin assistant for attendance monitors pupils arriving late, the amount of minutes late as well as the reason for lateness.
3. Where a pupil is persistently late then a letter is sent home to parents, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Persistently late means more than two occasions in any two consecutive weeks or more than four occasions in any four consecutive weeks. The Office Manager is responsible for informing the Head Teacher of any possible exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances can only be approved by the Head Teacher.

4. If a pupil's parents have received a letter regarding lateness and punctuality has not improved the school Office Manager should arrange a meeting between the Deputy Headteacher, the Admin assistant and parent. At this meeting the school should stress the importance of punctuality and discuss with the parents reasons for lateness to see if any support can be offered. After the meeting the child's punctuality should be monitored. If the child's punctuality does not improve then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter.
5. If a parent is unable to make the appointment set for the above meeting then another appointment should be offered. If a parent is still not able to attend this meeting then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter. Parents will be informed in writing that this will happen.
6. The Office Manager will give the Head Teacher regular updates of parents receiving letters regarding punctuality. The Office Manager must also inform the Head Teacher of the parents attending meetings. In certain instances it may be more appropriate for the Head Teacher to lead the meeting about punctuality.
7. All letters to parents regarding punctuality should be copied to the child's file by the Admin Assistant. Class teachers should be informed by the Admin Assistant of letters sent to individual pupils in their class.
8. . Class teachers must share the responsibility for encouraging good punctuality among their class by discussing the impact of frequent lateness on a child's learning in class.
9. For more complex and ongoing concerns with regards to a child's punctuality the Pastoral Care Manager will be notified and asked to monitor concerns. The Pastoral Care Manager will then forward information of findings to the class teachers, Office Manager, Admin assistant and Head teacher.
10. The Head teacher reserves the right to accelerate the process direct to a meeting or referral to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority should the pupil's punctuality or attendance not improve.

Absence

1. Parents should inform the school office of the reason for their child's absence by 9:30am on the first day of absence. Notification can be made with a telephone call or a note. The schools Admin Assistant must record the reason for absence. All absences must be confirmed in writing by the parent even if the parent has already informed the school via a telephone call.
2. The Admin Assistant (Attendance) should monitor absence carefully and report to the Office Manager her findings. The Office Manager is supported in this task with regular meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer. A child's attendance should be monitored carefully if it falls below 95% or if the Admin Assistant (Attendance) notices a pattern of non-attendance; e.g. regular absence on a Monday.
3. The Office Manager should inform the Head Teacher of any concerns regarding absence; if it falls below 95% or there is a pattern of notified absence. Typically, the school will write to the parents and inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% and is a cause for concern. Parents will also be informed in this letter that their child's attendance is being closed monitored and further action will be taken if attendance continues to fall.
4. If the pupil's attendance does not improve then a meeting may be set up between the Office Manager, the Admin Assistant (Attendance) and the pupil's parents. At this meeting the importance of good attendance should be stressed and the reasons for the absences discussed to see if any support can be offered. At this meeting parents are encouraged to bring any evidence (e.g. medical letters) to explain the reasons for their

child's poor attendance. Parents may also be informed at this meeting that any further absences may require medical evidence (e.g. Doctor's note, evidence of prescription) to support the reason for their child's absence otherwise the absences may be recorded as unauthorised. After the meeting the child's attendance must be monitored by the school Admin Assistant (Attendance). If the child's attendance does not improve then the matter should be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer who will contact the parents regarding this matter.

5. In serious cases of poor attendance (generally below 85%) the Local Authority Attendance Officer will call parents to a meeting that may consist of the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher, the Attendance Officer, the Office Manager, the Pastoral Care Manager and a school governor.. The panel can request a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued from the Attendance Office at Slough Borough Council. This is typically requested if the child has 10 unauthorised sessions in a 12 week period. In more serious cases the Attendance Officer can consider sending parents to court.
6. If a parent is unable to make the appointment set for the initial meeting then another appointment should be offered. If a parent is still not able to attend this meeting then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer and the parents are informed.
7. All meetings with parents regarding attendance should be recorded by the Admin Assistant (Attendance) or the Office Manager and a copy placed in the pupil's file. Class teachers should be informed by the Admin assistant of meetings with parents regarding attendance.
8. Class teachers are expected to share concerns regarding a child's attendance with the school Pastoral Care Manager. Class teachers must share the responsibility for encouraging good attendance among their class.

Strategies to encourage good attendance

1. The Admin Assistant (Attendance) ensures that all class teachers have a copy of their pupil's attendance and punctuality record for parents evening. The Office Manager must highlight any concerns (e.g. less than 95% attendance) as well as successes (e.g. 100% attendance). The class teacher must use these comments and any additional information during their discussion about attendance and punctuality with the parents.
2. The school Office Manager must ensure that a copy of pupils' attendance and punctuality record is given to parents alongside pupils' annual school report. The Office Manager must highlight concerns and successes to the Head Teacher who will comment on these on the school report.
3. At the end of each term, the school Office Manager should prepare certificates, signed by the Head Teacher, to present to all pupils with 100% attendance and punctuality. Certificates should also be awarded at the end of the year.
4. The breakfast club is another opportunity to encourage pupils not to be late to school. This service is run by school staff in the Key Stage 1 hall and is available to all pupils. There is a fee for this service, however the school subsidises the breakfast club to ensure that it is financially viable for parents.

Children collected late

1. Parents should collect their child on time.
2. If a parent is late **due to an emergency** then the child should be brought by the class teacher to the school office at 3.30pm and handed over to the Pastoral Care Manager or a member of the Office Staff who will attempt to contact the child's parents. The member of staff will record the child's name in the late collection book. If the child has still not been collected by 4.45pm then the child should be handed over to the care of the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head Teacher.

3. If a parent is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour late, has not left a message with the school and cannot be contacted then the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher should consider telephoning the Attendance Service for advice. If they are not available then social services will be contacted and if they are not available then the police.
4. The child must not be allowed to leave school with anyone other than the parent or the adult the parent has nominated on his/her behalf.
5. If a parent is late to collect their child from an after school club then the procedure above should be followed by the member of staff left in charge of the club.
6. If a parent is continually late collecting their child then a meeting will be called between a member of staff and the parents. Initially this meeting is likely to involve the school Office Manager and the Pastoral Care Manager but if it continues then the Head Teacher will become involved.

Collecting children early from school

(Illness, medical and dental appointments)

1. Permission for medical or dental appointments is given if the appointments cannot be made outside school hours or during school holidays. Parents must bring the appointment card when requesting an absence. A copy is made and added to the child's records. If no appointment card or letter can be produced, this will count as an unauthorised absence.
2. A book is maintained in the school welfare room for the purposes of recording pupils leaving the site for medical or dental appointments or for any other reason that takes them off site during school sessions.
3. A book is maintained in reception for children arriving at school after school sessions start.
4. Pupils must not leave the site unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult, nominated by their parent, and have been signed out.

Exceptional Circumstances

1. Only truly exceptional circumstances are sanctioned through authorised absence; e.g. an older brother or sister's graduation/family bereavement and these will be recorded as compassionate leave.
2. Exceptional Circumstances are defined by the Head Teacher. All requests for exceptional leave must be done by writing to the Head Teacher.
3. The school responds sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or major life events.
4. **Requests for family holidays will not be granted as exceptional leave.**
5. **We treat each case individually, however compassionate leave is typically given for a maximum of 2 days.**

Days of Religious Observance

Pupils may request leave of absence on days set apart by their religion for religious festivals. These absences must be notified in writing as soon as the week of the festival is known. A letter must be sent to the Headteacher requesting this absence.

Interviews

When a pupil attends an interview or examination in connection with an application for a place at secondary school, this absence will be recorded as authorised.

Off-Site Activities

These may be divided into two categories:

1. School directed (e.g. educational visits). School directed activities constitute authorised absences.
2. Activities particular to an individual pupil; e.g. music examination are generally authorised. It is reasonable to request evidence (e.g. a letter confirming the examination) in order to authorise this absence.

Excluded Pupils

1. When a pupil has been temporarily excluded then the absence is regarded as authorised.
2. When a pupil has been permanently excluded his or her absence should be treated as authorised whilst any review or appeal is in progress. At the end of the review or appeal process, if the exclusion is confirmed then the pupil must be taken off roll.

Linked school governor for attendance

1. The schools named linked governor for care, guidance and support is Margaret Dickinson.

Persistently absent pupils (PA) At the end of each term St. Ethelbert's, along with all other schools in the country, has to submit the names of the individual pupils who have attendance below 85% to the Local Authority. Each case will be discussed and appropriate actions implemented if deemed necessary.

Review and Monitoring:

The Governing Body will review and monitor this policy in agreement with our schedule or in response to changes in legislation.