

St. William of Perth Catholic Primary School
School Attendance Policy



Responsible committee: Curriculum
Approved by Governing Body: October 2020
Review Date: Annually (Autumn term)

Mission Statement

Our mission is to nourish the growth of all its members as persons illuminated by the light of Christ as our Catholic values permeate all aspects of school life. We aim to provide a quality education where high standards of attainment and behaviour are expected. We encourage all our pupils to develop as life-long learners as they strive to reach their full physical, intellectual and social potential. This happens within an atmosphere of love, respect and tolerance of others in mutual co-operation within our School, Home and Parish family.

Introduction

School lays the vital foundations for a child's future life. Research shows that irregular attendance can adversely affect academic and social development. Parents/carers and school staff must work in partnership to make each child's education a positive and successful experience and to ensure that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

Parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their children are punctual and have good attendance at school. They are helped to do this by being encouraged to follow our established systems for informing school in case of absence, and to bring to the school's attention any concerns or difficulties that may be affecting their child's attendance or punctuality. As a school we will offer all the support we can to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

This policy adheres to the school's Equality Plan, incorporating Disability, Gender and Race Equality Schemes.

Approaches to ensure good attendance

At St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, we aim to provide a positive, welcoming and supportive environment within the school and its classrooms. We emphasise to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and we aim to offer a consistent approach to attendance matters through the implementation of procedures to record and follow up pupils' absences and lateness, as well as praising and rewarding excellent and improved pupil attendance.

Procedures for implementing the policy

When parents attend the induction meeting before their children begin their schooling, the importance of regular attendance and punctuality is stressed. New parents, whose children are admitted to school throughout the year, are also given an outline of procedures in the school brochure. All parents will be given a copy of "Parent's Guide to Attendance & Punctuality."

Absence

There are several types of absence:

Persistent absence - missing more than 10% of possible attendances in any one term. Levels of attendance falling below 90% will be regarded by the school as causing concern and will trigger school-based intervention.

Intermittent absence - missing days or half days in succeeding weeks, whether in a regular or irregular pattern, totalling a considerable number of absences over a half term or term.

Absconding - when a pupil leaves the school premises having been registered as present.

Authorised - the school approves the absence for a valid reason, for example, genuine illness or death in a family. After two days absence due to pupil illness, parents are required to provide medical evidence such as photocopy of medical appointment card or prescription.

St William of Perth follows the NHS guidelines set out by the Health Protection Agency that stipulates that children should remain absent from school for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. During their recovery, parents are requested to collect work to be completed at home.

Medical appointments should, if possible, be arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible it is expected pupils only miss part of the school day.

Unauthorised - the school does not approve the absence and will be recorded as **O** on your child's attendance record.

Examples of absences which will **be not be authorised**:

- o A child is kept off school because a parent is ill.
- o A child is absent because a sibling is ill.
- o The parent cannot get the child to school.
- o The child is taken on a shopping trip.
- o The child is absent due to birthday treat/family treat.
- o A child is absent due to family work patterns.
- o The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- o The family have overslept.
- o The parents have forgotten the term dates.
- o There is a problem with the uniform.

Sanctions

Where absences are unauthorised in conjunction with Medway Council Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and academies in cases where the school have recorded the pupil as unauthorised and when added to other unauthorised absences already recorded in the register, the total amounts to, 10 unauthorised sessions within a six school week period then a Penalty Notice may be served on each parent/carer.

In the early stages an Attendance Advisory Practitioner might form the opinion that the serving of a Penalty Notice is appropriate e.g. in cases where a parent continuity fails to provide an explanation for their child's absence in accordance with the school procedures and absence is recorded as unauthorised in the register of least 10 sessions in any previous six-week period.

With immediate effect, we will consider issuing penalty notices for 10 or more unauthorised absences within a six week period. This will be school weeks only.

Referral can be made to the AAP, where legal sanctions may be applied, in the usual manner.

Where 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) occur, the school can apply to the LEA for the issuing of a Penalty Notice.* This application would be made after consultation with the AAP. Payment of Penalty Notices discharges liability for prosecution for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates (ss44A (2) AND (4) of the Education Act 1996 as inserted by s23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003). This means that neither the fact that a Penalty Notice was issued and paid nor the pattern of unauthorised absence to which a paid notice relates can be submitted as evidence in a prosecution for any subsequent offence. In circumstances where the Penalty Notice is not paid, Medway Council may use the fact that a notice was issued and unpaid as evidence in a subsequent prosecution and the unauthorised absence for which the penalty notice was issued can be used in evidence in the usual way.

The offence of non - school attendance is absolute, and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

*£120 fine for each adult / carer in the household if paid within 28 days.

£60 each for each adult / carer in the household if paid within 21 days.

Failure to pay will result in a summons to the magistrate court.

Contacting the school

Parents/carers are informed that they need to contact school on the first day of absence, to explain their child's absence, and when they anticipate their child will return to school. If no contact is made before 9.30 am, the school office makes a telephone call.

If the child continues to be absent for more than three days the school will make an update check by phone or e-mail and will request medical evidence. If your child has

under 90% attendance, medical evidence is required for each day of absence due to ill health.

If a child continues to be absent, the details will be passed on to the Head teacher who will contact the parent/carer and consider if referral to Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) is appropriate.

Whenever the school is unable to contact a parent/ carer because of inaccurate /outdated contact details the Class teachers will arrange a meeting to clarify details and school policy once the child has returned to school.

If absence is unexplained or unjustified, then it will remain unauthorised and lead to the necessary action being taken.

If a child is absent regularly or over an extended period; or there is a pattern to the absences; or if the school is unhappy with the reason given to explain absence, the Head teacher will contact the parent/carer and invite him/her to discuss the child's attendance. This is a pre-referral meeting and failure to attend generates an automatic referral to the AAP.

Authorisation of holidays during term time

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons on their return. There is consequent risk of underachievement, which must be avoided.

Parents **should not book a family holiday during term time**. Parents do not have the right to take their child for such a holiday and the school will not authorise such an absence. Should the holiday be taken, despite this knowledge, this will be recorded as **G** on your child's attendance record. If there is a serious domestic reason to take a child out of school, e.g. to attend a family funeral, parents must complete an "Application for leave of absence/exceptional circumstances" form.

In the event of a holiday taken in term time without the express agreement of the school, the Headteacher will immediately request the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

The amount payable on issue of a penalty notice is £60 per adult/carer in the household per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a summons being issued to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Local Authority will be responsible for deciding whether a Penalty Notice is issued and the Code of Conduct governing the procedures to be followed are set out in the 'Penalty Notices for Truancy' document.

Should unauthorised absence become a concern the Governors will be obliged to consider such absence as serious and will consider all options up to and including removing the child from the school register.

Lateness

The school day begins at **8.55am**. Children can come into the building from **8.40am**.

Children may not be left before this time as they are not supervised.

Registration takes place at **8.55am**.

Children arriving in school after **8.55am** and before **9.25am** will be marked late and parents will be expected to give a valid reason for the lateness.

9.25am is the official time that registers are closed. If a child arrives after this time an absence will be recorded as **U** on your child's attendance record.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken. This may involve contacting the appropriate authority outside the school.

The class teachers will monitor lateness on a weekly basis. If a child is regularly late, class teachers will inform the Head teacher who will send a letter to the parent/carer. If the child continues to be late, an appointment will be made with the parent/carer in order to agree a way forward.

If there is a negative response or little or no improvement after discussions about attendance or lateness, a referral will be made to the AAP.

Registration

It is of the utmost importance that registers are completed fully and correctly so that accurate attendance records can be kept and any problems addressed promptly. All staff have responsibility for this, but it is the Headteacher who will be the first one alerted to any attendance concerns.

Collection of children at the end of the school day

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day. **3.10pm** for Foundation and **3.20pm** for Key stages One and Two.

On occasions, a parent may be delayed when collecting their child. If the child is in Foundation Stage, they wait in their classroom until **3.20pm** and will then be taken to wait at the school office.

Children in Key Stage 2 wait with their teacher at the school office.

No pupil may leave the school unless collected by their parent/carer or a person named on the child's "Going Home" form. Year 6 pupils may leave school unaccompanied if their parent/carer has given written permission.

Procedures for those having Parental Responsibility but not living in the children's home

We are required to maintain a list of names and addresses of those having parental responsibility. The law instructs us to make **reasonable** attempts to gather such information in the case of parents not living in the child's home.

In order to do this, we may ask one parent to provide appropriate details of the other.

Key Personnel

The Governing Body is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Attendance Policy and work closely with the Head teacher to evaluate the successes of the strategies implemented.

The Head teacher is responsible for reporting attendance to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality and are responsible for informing the Head teacher should there be an issue. The Head teacher is responsible for regular reviews of all attendance issues and registers, as well as liaison with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies.

When a concern is identified, the class teacher will liaise with the parents/carers concerned in the first instance and will refer to the Head teacher if the situation does not improve. If this fails to create an improvement after a reasonable period, the AAP will be asked to contribute to a formal meeting with the parent/carer to discuss the issues preventing attendance.

The final stage will involve the problem being dealt with legally by the AAP with the support of the Head teacher. This could result in a penalty notice being issued to the parent/carer concerned.

Each term the AAP is responsible for carrying out regular checks on school registers in partnership with the Head teacher. The AAP is contacted immediately if the Head teacher has identified a cause for concern in the interim period between monitoring visits.

The school attendance officer is responsible for entering data and obtaining feedback; informing teaching staff of notified absences/lates; making first day absence calls.

It is vital that all members of the school community work together to instil good attendance and punctuality in pupils as a means of preparing them to be socially responsible and to facilitate learning, allowing all pupils to have equality of opportunity and achieve their potential.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually, along with the effectiveness of the systems that are in place.