

All Saints Catholic Primary School



**Is your child in school today?
Poor attendance = poor prospects!
Missing school = missing out!**

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2020/21

At All Saints Catholic Primary School, we refer to the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of The Child as the basis for our policies. Article 28 states that “Every child has the right to learn and go to school”. We believe this to be a key responsibility for any parent/carer.

If children are to reach their full potential, it is important that they attend school regularly and on time. Here at All Saints Catholic Primary School we do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. If a child is in school on time regularly their chances of developing well both academically and emotionally/socially are greatly enhanced.

Objectives

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly
- To ensure that all children attend school on time
- To keep accurate records of attendance through school registration
- To monitor and take immediate action on poor attendance
- To work with parents to ensure their children attend school on time each day and where this is not happening take action
- Liaise with School Nurse and other agencies in cases where there are health matters

Legal framework

- The Education Act 2002 states that:
- The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
 - (a) To their age, ability and aptitude, and

- (b) To any special educational need they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age –

- (a) When they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed and
- (b) Otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year -

- (a) If they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following.
- (b) If they attain that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

All Saints Catholic Primary school aims to comply with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body of our school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Our Governing Body believes that good attendance at school is the first step towards pupil progress and achievement. Good punctuality shows respect for teachers and peers and ensures that children are ready and willing to learn.

The Governing Body has nominated the Safeguarding Link Governor to take the lead on attendance issues.

School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Draw up an attendance policy, and seek governing body approval of this;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, and government legislation;
- Report attendance data to the governing body each term;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;

- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they will seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that the attendance register is taken twice daily (at 8.45am and when lunchtimes finish)

Parents and carers

All Saints Catholic Primary School expects that parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child(ren) attend(s) school regularly;
- Support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum, including avoiding medical and dental appointments during school time wherever possible;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- Notify school on the first day of absence, and include an expected date of return.

We also expect parents/carers to:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school, and promote the value of regular school attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It

is vital the child receives the same message at home as at school about the importance of attendance.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Are aware of the importance of regular school attendance;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Taking into account the age and level of maturity of each child;
- Follow correct set school procedures if they arrive late.

Strategies

- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session and will highlight to the Safeguarding/Attendance Lead any absences that are cause for concern
- Children arriving late should be registered late on arrival, by their parent/carer, on the school's electronic registration system
- Parents are asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is going to be absent
- The school operates a first day response system for children who are absent with no reason given. If we do not hear from a parent/carer, a telephone call, from school, will be made to the family on the first day of absence, to try to establish a reason for the absence. This is carried out every morning

- Registers are monitored daily and in the first instance letters are sent out to parents of poor attenders, followed by invitation to a school based attendance panel if there is no improvement. The schools' expectations for the child's attendance are outlined at this meeting and reinforced by letter.
 - School buys in the services of a Senior Early Help Worker, who supports with poor attendance
 - Children who are included in a school panel will have their attendance closely monitored and tracked to ensure improvement
 - Attendance is analysed by the Safeguarding/Attendance Lead to take account of absence code, registration group, year group, special educational needs, ethnicity, gender, attainment and vulnerable groups (including children in care and children in receipt of pupil premium)
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- As far as possible, inset days (5 per school year) will be organised to present minimum disruption, coming at the beginning or end of the school term
 - As part of the monitoring process, school Governors are kept well informed. This information is presented at Governors' meetings on a regular basis throughout the year, by the Safeguarding and Attendance Lead
 - The school works closely with other agencies to support children who have poor attendance. For example, this might be Joe Farrell, Senior Early Help Worker, Young Carers, Social Care etc.

- **Doors to the classrooms open at 8.30am and pupils are expected to be sitting at their tables, ready to learn, by 8.45am.**

Parents/carers should ensure that their children are not left unattended on school premises before 8.30am. They should speak to a member of school staff if they are having difficulties. School will always accommodate a parent/carer who, on the rare occasion, needs to drop-off before 8.30am. School operates a daily Breakfast Club.

If a pupil is going to be absent a parent/carer should:

- Contact the school before 8.45am, giving the reason for the absence.
- For absences of more than five days, medical evidence will be required. This can be in the form of an appointment letter from hospital or dentist, a copy of a prescription, medication prescribed by a doctor or a doctor's note.
- If a child is reluctant to come to school, parents/carers are obliged to contact school immediately and a support package will then be put in place. **Under no circumstances should parents/carers condone the absence or use issues with other children in or out of school as an excuse for non-attendance.**

Key Contacts:

Mrs C Kennedy – Lead Safeguarding and Attendance Officer

Mrs S Kirwan – Breakfast Club Registration

Mr J Farrell – Senior Early Help Worker

Mrs L Wilkins – Designated Governor for Attendance and Punctuality

Leaving school early:

To minimise disruption to learning, we ask that as far as possible routine appointments are made out of school hours, or at the end of the school day.

If a pupil needs to leave school early for an appointment, parents should provide written medical evidence of this, e.g. an appointment card/letter. Parents will be expected to sign their child out electronically, when leaving school early.

Parents should make alternative arrangements, wherever possible, for siblings to be collected at the end of the school day, if taking a child out early for an appointment.

Contacting parents/carers:

Parents/carers should ensure that the school has up to date home contact numbers. **This is a safeguarding requirement, as it is essential that school staff are able to make contact with a child's family in an emergency.** School should also be provided with at least two other emergency contacts for the child.

Punctuality:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children are immediately placed at a disadvantage when they are walking into a lesson late and can miss out on vital information. It also indicates to staff that their work is not valued by a parent/carer. Late arrivals can cause disruption to the rest of the class.

Punctuality is monitored closely and minutes late recorded. Parents/carers of children who are regularly late arriving will be invited to a punctuality panel in school, sometimes supported by the Senior Early Help Worker and the Attendance Governor

Leave of absence:

Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays during term time, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Parents/carers should make clear the reasons for the leave of absence in a letter, addressed to the Head Teacher, who will then consider the circumstances of the application and make a decision. Previous patterns of the child's school attendance will also be taken into consideration.

Leave of absence to attend, for example, away days/events with dance troupe/ sports clubs, will not be authorised. Parents and carers are strongly advised to inform those organising such activities of the school calendar dates, so that these events may be organised to coincide with school holidays.

Holiday dates are published in newsletters and on the school website. It is a parent/carer's responsibility to share these dates with family to avoid any confusion.

Persistent absenteeism (PA):

The attendance of children who are persistently absent from school is monitored daily (these are children who have been absent 10% or more of the time). These parents/carers are called to Panel in the first instance, however if there is no improvement a fixed penalty will be issued by the Local Authority. Failure to pay will result in a court appearance.

Fixed Penalties:

Fixed penalties are issued by the Local Authority for 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence per term, or 18 or more sessions over two terms. The penalty is £60 per child, per parent, to be paid within 24 days. If this is not paid it doubles to £120 per child, per parent. Failure to pay will result in the parent being taken to court for none attendance.

Adverse Weather Conditions:

School is well prepared for dealing with the rare occasions when adverse weather is an issue. Staff and Governors are committed to ensuring school runs as normally as possible on these occasions. In these situations we follow DFE procedures and will keep parents up

to date through text messages, telephone calls and the school's website.

Children missing school due to illness, injury or hospitalisation:

School staff will liaise with parents/carers to provide school work as far as is practicable, given the circumstances. It is not school policy for staff to provide work for pupils who are absent due to holidays in term time.

Children missing from education (CME):

Non-attenders who are found to have moved house without explanation, are reported to the Child Missing Education Co-ordinator at the Town Hall. This is done following unsuccessful telephone calls by the school office staff and unsuccessful visits to the family home by the Safeguarding/Attendance Lead and/or the Senior Early Help Worker.

Recognition for excellent attendance:

This is recognised each Friday at whole school assemblies, when the class with the highest percentage attendance takes ownership of the school's attendance mascot for the week.

Excellent attendance will be recognised by school through the presentation of certificates at the end of each term. The school's annual prize giving in July is a great opportunity for year long, excellent attendance to be acknowledged and celebrated. With parents/carers invited to this invitation only, special event.

Support:

The school is happy to do all it can to support parents/carers to fulfil their role in ensuring excellent attendance and punctuality.

Communication is key here and we ask you at home to let us know if there are any difficulties (new baby, illness, change of circumstances etc) that may affect attendance or punctuality. We will always do our best to help.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Covid19

Breakfast Club - Unfortunately, during the current Covid19 pandemic priority will be given to parents needing to go out to work and those accessing training. This is in order to keep numbers at a manageable level.

Please check the school website regularly for updates during the current pandemic.