



# ST. PATRICK'S AND ST EDMUND'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

<i>Date Policy Approved:</i>	<i>12<sup>th</sup> October 2016</i>
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<i>Date of Next Review:</i>	<i>Autumn 2019</i>

## ST. PATRICK'S & ST. EDMUND'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE POLICY

“We come to a Roman Catholic School and so believe that Jesus was born, died and rose again for everyone. We aim to help, encourage and show God’s way to our families, making sure that our Catholic traditions and faith are kept alive. Each year at school, we learn a little bit more about our faith so that we can grow to love God and each other more.”

At our schools, we seek at all times to be a witness to Jesus Christ. We remember this when putting our policies into practice. Therefore this pay policy will reflect the Catholic identity and mission of our schools and the values it proclaims.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 At our schools we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. By ensuring good attendance parents are really helping their children to achieve the very best that they can. Good attendance = good results!
- 1.3 At our schools we value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.4 At our schools we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our parent’s copy of the attendance policy, our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

### **2. Legal Framework**

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:
  - present;
  - absent;
  - present at approved educational activity; or
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### 3. Categorising Absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/guardian, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.
- 3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- Illness Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the head teacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
  - Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.
  - Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.
  - Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
  - Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the head teacher. All holidays taken during school time are recorded as unauthorised.
  - If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates court.
  - Religious Observance acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence.
  - Late Arrival Registration begins at 09:00, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 09:30 (no more than thirty minutes after the opening of the register) pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.
  - On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
  - The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
  - The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.
  - Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the head teacher.

3.5 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays

#### **4. Deletions from the Register**

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

4.2 Our schools will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Our schools believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated offsite
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

5.2 The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### 5.3 Phase leaders and teaching staff and Learning support staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### 5.4 Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations

- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher.

## 6. Using Attendance Data

- 6.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 6.2 Every week we will provide all class teachers with attendance data for the previous week, for each class. The list will be presented in class order and will be colour coded as indicated below:

***GREEN pupils with attendance between 100% and 97%***

***AMBER - GREEN pupils with attendance between 96% and 95%***

***RED - AMBER pupils with attendance between 94% and 90%***

***RED pupils with attendance below 90%***

- 6.3 The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.
- 6.4 This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).
- 6.5 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 6.6 Our schools will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.
- 6.7 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. 7 7. Support Systems

## 7. Support Systems

- 7.1 School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.
- 7.2 Our schools also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
- 7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters through newsletters and the school website.
  - Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
  - Have a display board in reception dedicated to attendance of both individual pupils and classes.
  - Rewarding achievements by way of certificates for attendance and other awards.
  - Discussion with parents and pupils
  - Attendance panels
  - Parenting contracts
  - Referrals to support agencies
  - Pupil Voice Activities
- 7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.
- 7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, at our schools we will consider the use of legal sanctions.

This attendance policy was agreed by the teaching staff of both schools on 10th October 2016. It was presented to & reviewed by the Executive Core Group on 12th October 2016 and then ratified by the Full Governing Bodies on 13th & 14th December 2016.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)

Print Name: REV FATHER GERALD MURPHY This policy will be reviewed in the Autumn term 2019