

St Cecilia's Catholic Infant & Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY



The School considers that regular attendance is 97%

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

Parent's/ Children's responsibilities:

- Attend school every day and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Attend school punctually and appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems/concerns they may have that may affect school attendance
- Ensure that they contact the school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school and provide evidence to support this.
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- To take holidays during the school holiday period
- To make medical and dentist appointments outside of school time if possible and provide an appointment card accordingly.
- To co-operate with the school in our aim to improve attendance

The School's Responsibilities:

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- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment.
- All staff aim to promote the importance of good attendance.
- Inform parents of their responsibilities for maintaining regular attendance for their child.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns and support any family in difficulty or crisis.
Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents/children of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Make enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- **Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare.**
Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Understanding types of absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the LA using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences that have not been properly explained □ Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays, day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

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Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls below 90%. **If your child is identified as a PA pupil or is on track to become a PA we will consider this a priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately** so that, together with our EWO, we can put a plan in place to get your child back to regular school attendance.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to the child's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school's classroom doors are open from 8.45am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
Registration takes place at 8.55am and pupils who arrive after this time, will be recorded as late to school.
Registers close at 9.30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with initially through the Class Teacher, who will make referral to the Headteacher and will in turn be referred to Education Welfare.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing** the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- All pupils leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol.

Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, **however they may be subject to change**. In line with the Government's amendments to legislation surrounding holidays during term time, from 1st September 2013 holidays during will **NOT** be authorised. The new law gives no

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entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday in term time. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- In **exceptional circumstances** permission may be granted providing your child has a good (97% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 2 weeks prior to the requested date.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty Notices for Holidays

In accordance with guidance from Liverpool LA and in line with the amendments made to the Education (Penalty Notices)(England) Regulations the following now applies:

- The Headteacher can request that the LA issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the LA is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

- Penalty Notices are issued to **each** parent for **each** child.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance.

At St Cecilia's Infant & Nursery School regular attendance meetings take place with the EWO to discuss children who are identified as a cause for concern with regard to attendance. The EWO, Headteacher (or Deputy) and Link Governor for Attendance may attend these meetings in order to establish any factors which may be relevant in each case. Following this, parents may be contacted to inform, discuss and offer support, if required. The EWO may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform us as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the LA Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

School Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and each child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Our target is 97%. We are aiming for this because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling. On a weekly basis classes in the school win cups for both attendance and punctuality. These are awarded at our celebration Assembly and all children are made aware of the importance of both attendance and punctuality.

Summary

St Cecilia's Catholic Infant & Nursery School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and children as this is the best way to ensure high levels of attendance.

This policy was presented to the Governing Body and agreed on.....

Headteacher.....Chair of Governors.....

Reviewed.....Date.....

Reviewed.....Date.....

Reviewed.....Date.....