

Our Lady and St Patrick's RC Primary School



Attendance Policy 2020-21

Living, loving and learning together in God's way

Rationale

Our Lady and St Patrick's is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, excellent attendance is crucial.

We organise and do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems, which impede full attendance, will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital all children are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Purpose of our Policy

1. To have clear, relevant guidelines for register keeping which are carefully and routinely carried out by staff.
2. To ensure that excellent attendance has a high priority with pupils, parents and teachers.
3. To demonstrate clearly stated procedures for swift follow-up when there is a concern about an absence.
4. To recognise that matters relating to the quality of the curriculum and teaching and the School's ethos and relationships are most significant in encouraging excellent attendance.
5. To understand the action that can and will be taken by the school to ensure good attendance.

Rights, responsibilities and roles

The School

1. All staff will understand the registration process.
2. All registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, and returned promptly. NB: Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable; they provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a Court of Law.
3. The school will ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents.
4. The school will accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness.
5. Attendance for individual pupils will be monitored on a weekly basis by the school safeguarding team, in order to identify persistent absentees and those children at risk of becoming persistent absentees.
7. The school will identify clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities.
8. The school will annually review its attendance policy and associated procedures.

Parents/Carers

1. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfill this duty may result in the Local Authority taking legal action in accordance with s444 Education Act 1996.
2. Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
3. Parents/Carers are responsible for immediately informing the school at which their child is registered of the reason for any absence by phone call, or where possible, in person on the first morning of any absence and thereafter. This should be done by 9.15am.
4. Parents should not arrange family absences in term time.
5. Parents/Carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.
6. Parents/Carers should not take their child on holiday in term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a Penalty Notice being issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the school's prior written permission.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

All absences must be explained by a parent/carer. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences are:

- Illness (1)
- Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement
- Days of religious observance
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (2)

Absences from the school will not be authorised for:

- Absences not agreed, this will always include first and last day of half terms unless medical evidence provided
- Birthdays, if ill on a birthday medical evidence will be required
- Shopping
- Looking after family members
- Visiting relatives

(1) Illness

Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for 5 consecutive days or more due to illness OR where a child's attendance is below 96% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised. Medical evidence can be in the form of a copy of a prescription, medication or an appointment card showing name of child and date they visited. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition, evidence should be provided. Referral to School Nurse/Family Support may be made to offer advice and support to the family.

(2) Medical/dental appointments

All routine (non emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a child need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school not authorising the absence.

All non-emergency appointments will not be authorised.

Holidays in term time/ Leave of absence

Legislation

From the 1st September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

These amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Requesting the absence

All requests for a child to be absent from School during term time must be made in writing at least a half term in advance of the proposed absence by completing the absence request form (S2) obtainable from the school office.

The headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis, and will only do so where there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a decision is made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, the school will notify parents/carers of that decision.

If the absence is unauthorised and still taken, the school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a Penalty Notice to the parent(s)/carer(s) for the unauthorised absence. Only one PN will be issued per parent/carers per child within a two year period. This means that if you paid a PN and then committed a further offence contrary to s444(1) Education Act 1996 within the next two years, you are likely to be summoned to Court for the most recent offence. If convicted, you could receive a fine of up to £1000. If you are convicted of an offence under s444(1) Education Act 1996, and you commit a further offence within the next 5 years, you will be summoned for the more serious offence contrary to s444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted, you could receive a fine of up to £2500 or up to 3 months imprisonment.

If no absence request is made

If a child is absent from school during term time and no prior absence request has been made, the school will write to the parent(s)/carer(s) to inform them that the absence has not been authorised and that a Penalty Notice may be issued.

If the parent(s)/carer(s) can demonstrate that the child's absence during this time was due to an exceptional circumstance and that an absence request could not have been made in advance of the said absence, then a referral for legal action will not be made to the Local Authority.

Please be aware:

Parent(s)/carer(s) who take their child out of school without prior written authorisation from the school may be subject to a £60 penalty notice per child, per parent from the Local Authority.

Parent(s)/carer(s) must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Non-payment of the penalty within those timescales may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child. A 'parent' can be any person who has parental responsibility.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

First day reporting

On the first day of absence the parent/carer should ring the school between 8.30am and 9.15am to inform the office that their child will be absent and give a reason for the absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is to be provided.

Administration staff keep a log of absence calls and reasons received each day.

Between 9.15am and 10.30am attendance/administrative staff will phone the parents/carers of any pupil whose absence is unexplained.

If there is no reply from the parents/carers a text message will be sent and if there is no response to this text message a letter will be sent at the end of the first day of absence.

The school will call any other contacts that have been provided, including grandparents and work.

If there is no contact on the second day the attendance/administrative staff will phone all contacts and send a further letter, a member of staff will visit the home address or sooner if necessary.

If there is no contact a further letter will be sent on day three advising that medical evidence will be required for further absences, or the absence will not be authorised.

If a child remains absent for three days without any notification, a member of staff will visit the home address or sooner if necessary.

It remains the school's responsibility to try to contact the parent and visit the home if necessary.

If a child is absent from school for 5 days, but the school knows where the child is, the school should make a referral to the LA for legal action.

If the child is missing for 20 consecutive days, and after making reasonable enquiries, the school cannot locate the child/parents, CME form should be submitted.

Please note: If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or if the school has particular safeguarding concerns and feels the child is at risk of immediate harm, the Academy will immediately notify the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Attendance Improvement Officer.

A child may be referred to the MASH if it is considered that they have totally disengaged from learning and/or the parent is subject to statutory intervention.

Lateness

There are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the child which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

Registration takes place between 9-9:10am. If a child arrives at school after 9 but before 9:10am they will be marked 'L' for late. This will not constitute an absence – but a late arrival.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Pupils who arrive between 9-9.10 are considered 'Late' (L) and will be required to enter the school via reception to sign in and record the reason for their late arrival.
- Children who arrive after 9:10 am should be considered as 'Late (after registers close)' (U unauthorised absence).
- Office staff will record the appropriate late mark in the registers.
- All children's attendance records will be checked fortnightly for "lates before registers close (L)" and "lates after registers close (U)". Where these lates cumulate to 3 or more in a half term the school will send a letter to the parents/carers of the pupil in question to discuss any support needs and ways of accessing support.

*** 10 or more 'late after registers close' (U) codes could result in the school making a referral to the Local Authority for legal action to be taken*

*** A child is late after registers close when they arrive after 9.10 am.*

Attendance letters

All pupils with attendance below 95% will be analysed on a weekly basis by the safeguarding team, in order to identify persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees. (Persistent absentees are pupils who have missed 19 days which equates to 38 sessions during the course of the academic year).

GREEN Letter

- ☐ At the weekly safeguarding meeting a cumulative Percentage Attendance Report is printed out showing children with under **95%** attendance.
- ☐ The attendance for each of these children is investigated. If the low attendance is due to documented and authorised illness no action is taken. If attendance has been greatly improved since the previous monitor and the percentage remains low due to poor attendance in a prior monitor period no letter is sent. If not a 'green' letter is sent home to Parents. (Appendix D)
- ☐ The parents may be invited in to meet with one of the Safeguarding Team to discuss concerns about level of absence.

AMBER

- At the weekly safeguarding meeting a cumulative Percentage Attendance Report is printed out showing children with under **93%** attendance.

- The attendance for each of these children is investigated. If the low attendance is due to documented and authorised illness no action is taken. If attendance has been greatly improved since the previous monitor and the percentage remains low due to poor attendance in a prior monitor period no letter is sent. If not an 'amber' letter is sent home to Parents. (Appendix E)
- One of the Safeguarding Team then meets with the Parent to discuss concerns about absence, and informs the attendance officer of the outcome of the meeting.

RED- (Persistent Absentee)

- At the weekly safeguarding meeting a cumulative Percentage Attendance Report is printed out showing children with under **90%** attendance.
 - The attendance for each of these children is investigated. If attendance has been greatly improved since the previous monitor and the percentage remains low due to poor attendance in a prior monitor period no letter is sent. If the low attendance is due to documented and authorised illness no action is taken. If not Children with concerns remaining - a 'red' letter is sent home to Parents. (Appendix F)
 - The Designated Safeguarding Lead and a member of the Pastoral Team then meet with the Parents to discuss concerns about absence and make a plan together for improvement in attendance.
 - If a pupil's attendance thereafter continues to cause concern the school may refer the child to the Parent Support Advisor or the Education Welfare Service.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Each week the class with the highest attendance percentage will be celebrated during Friday's assembly.

Conclusion

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our Trust will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If, at any time, a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences within a 6 months period, the school will consider making a referral to the Local Authority for legal action to be taken. Legal options include: Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, School Attendance Orders and Prosecution at a Magistrates Court. Please see the Local Authority website for further details.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Appendix A – Late Letter

ON HEADED PAPER

Dear «salutation»

LATE ATTENDANCE:

Name: «forename» «chosen_surname» **Class:** «reg» **Teacher:** «tutor»

Our records show that your child's punctuality currently falls below the acceptable level set out in our Attendance Policy. You will be aware that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital so that children are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. Late attendance at school not only has a detrimental effect on your child's education but also disrupts the whole class.

«forename» was late for school on «total_lates_both» occasions. (Please see attached details).

Children should arrive at school by **8.55 am** to enable them to be in class for

Morning Registration at 9 am

Afternoon Registration is at 1pm for KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2.

Please note:

- ☐ Children who arrive at school after **9am and up to 9.10am are recorded as 'late' on the register.**
- ☐ Children who arrive at school **after 9.10am are recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence for the session.**

All children who arrive at school **after 9am should report to the School Office for entry in the Late Register.**

Please note that late attendance is entered on your child's records and could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. I hope that by bringing this to your attention we can work in partnership to resolve it. Working together is the most effective way of making progress in improving both your child's punctuality, attendance and their learning.

Please complete and return the attached slip overleaf.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Angela Folland

Executive Head Teacher

Appendix B – Request for Medical Justification

ON HEADED PAPER

Dear Parent

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL – Illness and Medical Appointments

NAME: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

DATE OF BIRTH: «date_of_birth»

CLASS: «reg» **Teacher:**«tutor»

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL: «total_of_specified_codes»

Thank you for keeping us up to date with «chosen_forename» medical needs. I need to bring to your attention the total number of school sessions «chosen_forename» has missed through illness and medical appointments. Please see the attached registration data sheet.

Currently our school is authorising «chosen_forename»'s absences with a medical coding. However, «chosen_forename» has now had an excessive amount of missed sessions due to illness. Therefore as of today, absences will only be authorised by the school, if we are sufficiently satisfied that the reasons for the absence were completely unavoidable. You are invited to provide the school with additional information or documentation to enable us to make an informed decision regarding authorisation for each absence should you so wish.

If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition which keeps impacting on their ability to attend school fully, then we would ask that you talk to us about this and we will consider developing an Individual Health Care Plan with you and any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education.

If you, the parent, consider that there are other issues which impact on your child's ability to attend school regularly, then it may be possible for the school to access some additional support under Early Help. If you would like us to explore this with you then please get in touch.

There is clear evidence that attendance at school is directly related to academic achievement, and we ask for your support in ensuring that «chosen_forename» attends school and receives the education that will enable «him_her» to achieve as well as he/she is able.

Thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Folland
Executive Head Teacher

Appendix D – Absence Letter (Green)

ON HEADED PAPR

Dear «salutation»

ABSENCE - GREEN

Name: «forename» «chosen_surname»

Class: «reg» **Teacher:** «tutor»

Date of Birth: «date_of_birth»

Percentage Attendance: «percentage_attendance»

In accordance with our Attendance Policy, the school monitors each child's level of attendance. Our records show that «chosen_name»'s attendance has fallen below the 96.5% attendance target set by the Department for Education. This percentage is calculated cumulatively from the start of each academic year, whilst 96.5% seems a high percentage, it approximates to ½ day missed every two weeks.

You will be aware that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital so that children are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. Additionally, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Please find attached a copy of «chosen_name»'s attendance record for your information. It may be helpful to look at the pattern of absence and the reasons behind each absence. We do appreciate that children do have times when they are unable to attend school due to illness and hope that you will work with us, to ensure we fully aware of genuine illness, by telephoning on the first day and continuing to inform us of absence daily. Please also try to keep medical appointments outside of school hours, to minimise disruption to your child and the rest of the class.

We strive to provide an outstanding education for your child, but we can only do this if they are here. We hope to work together with you to make progress in improving both your child's attendance and consequently their learning. If you wish to discuss any concerns you have regarding «chosen_name»'s attendance, please speak in the first instance to «tutor». We will continue to monitor your child's attendance, if the percentage attendance does not improve over the next half term we will contact you again.

If you consider that there are issues which impact on your child's ability to attend school regularly, then it may be possible for the school to access some additional support under Early Help. If you would like us to explore this with you then please let the school know. The school's Attendance Policy is available to view on the school website. If you are unable to access this document online, copies are available from the school office

Thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Folland
Executive Head Teacher

Appendix E – Absence Letter (Amber)

ON HEADED PAPER

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

ABSENCE - AMBER

Name:«forename» «chosen_surname»

Date of Birth: «date_of_birth»

Class: «reg» **Teacher:** «tutor»

Percentage Attendance:«percentage_attendance»

Following my previous letter advising you of your child's low level of attendance, our records show that your child's attendance this half-term still falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school and now falls below 93%.

Due to continuing concerns over low attendance we would like to meet with you to discuss ways of supporting you to improve your child's attendance.

Please find attached a copy of «chosen_forename»'s attendance record for your information. It may be helpful to have looked at the pattern of absence and the reasons for it ahead of the meeting. We want to work with you to resolve the matter, as working in partnership is often the most effective way of making progress in improving both «chosen_forename»'s attendance and their learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Folland
Executive Head Teacher

F – Absence Letter (Red)

ON HEADED PAPER

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

PERSISTENT ABSENTEE - RED

Name: «forename» «chosen_surname»

Date of Birth: «date_of_birth»

Class: «reg» **Teacher:** «tutor»

Percentage Attendance: «percentage_attendance»

In accordance with our school's Attendance Policy, we are required to monitor percentage attendance rates for each child at our school. A percentage of 90% or less is used nationally as a definition for Persistent Absentees.

Following our meeting/discussion on XXXX regarding our concerns about XXX's continuing low attendance, records show that there has been no significant and lasting improvement and XXX is now considered to be 'at risk' of falling into the category of a Persistent Absentee as designated by the criteria laid down by the Department for Education.

The matter has now had to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who will monitor attendance and will be looking for immediate and significant improvement to prevent the possibility of legal escalation.

If you feel that there are genuine reasons for XXX's continued absence or you have significant medical evidence that you would like the school or the Education Welfare Service to consider then you must provide the school with this immediately.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Angela Folland

Executive Head Teacher