

**Sacred Heart Catholic Primacy School,  
A Voluntary Academy**



**Attendance Policy**

*Jesus said,  
"I chose you, and appointed you to go and bear  
much fruit."  
(John 15:16)*

**Our three consistencies are**

**Love of others**

**Love of self**

**Love of learning**

**Policy review date:** September 2022

**Person responsible:** Amanda Rhodes

**Ratified by Governors:** October 2022

**Review date:** September 2023

## **INTRODUCTION**

Our Attendance Governor is Adrian Kennedy.

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

## **WHY?**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Academy Council, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning.

Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.) However, some surgeries may charge for this (about £30-35).

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers and the school with its Academy Council.

## **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at **8.55 a.m.**
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**', giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and Bradford attendance officers to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance

## **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The school admin officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Executive Headteacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

**Stage 1:** Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

**Stage 2:** If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

**Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the local authority attendance officer.

**Stage 4:** If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer to deal with the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the Attendance Officer will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers.

## **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

***Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.***

***Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.***

***If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.***

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Executive Head teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

There are approximately 190 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

## **LATENESS**

**Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

- Doors open at 8.45am and the children must be in class by **8.55 a.m.** each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be shut by 9.00 am. Children

who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book.

- Lateness will be monitored and the school administrator will follow this up.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.00, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.

Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer.

### **SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

### **THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER –**

The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by Bradford when requested by the Acting Head teacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement.
- Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Academy Council reserves the right to:

- issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- issue a Penalty Notice without warning

Early intervention aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Early intervention involves engaging the parent and

specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 12 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court

### **Academy Council**

It is the Academy Council's legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Academy Council at SDP Committee meetings.

As a result of the DfE changes, at Sacred Heart, we have revised our attendance policy, to include the following:

- Application is to be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Executive Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised
- Leave of absence taken without authorisation **may** be referred to the Bradford Attendance Officer. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

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Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to a maximum of £1,000, plus costs.

Note: Parent also includes guardian/carers