



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

SAFEGUARDING

The Attendance and Punctuality Policy at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School forms part of our Safeguarding Policy Portfolio and demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of all our pupils.

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Regular attendance and punctuality is crucial if children are to make good progress at school.
- 1.2 The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, children, and parents and when appropriate the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school maintains attendance records and initiates quick and early intervention when a problem is identified. We feel it is crucial that children develop the habit of regular and punctual attendance and learn to be responsible and reliable. A child who's attendance drops to 90% will have missed 19 days of learning. Staff encourage good attendance, punctuality and liaise with parents and other agencies when appropriate. In addition, good attendance and punctuality are seen as achievements in their own right and are recognised as such by the school.
- 1.3 This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all children including Foundation Stage.

2. Registration

- 2.1 There are broad classifications in the attendance register:

Present:	Pupil on the school premises at the time of registration or by close of registers at 9.10 am
Approved educational activity:	Pupil is engaged in an approved supervised activity off site.
Authorised absence:	Pupil has the authority of the school to be absent where permission has been sought in advance.
Unauthorised absence:	No explanation received or unacceptable reason given.

The Department for Education tells schools how they should mark pupils' absences from school. They say what should be marked as authorised and what should be marked as unauthorised. (See appendix 1)

2.2 Symbols Used:

/	Present
V	Educational Visit/Activity
M	Medical/Dental Appointments/Confirmed Illness
H	Family Holiday
O	Unauthorised Absence
L	Late (Before registers close)
U	Late (After registers close)
C	Other authorised absence

N.B: Latecomers are counted as present and details noted in the Late Book or register.

2.3 Guidance on Completion of Registers

Registers are completed at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. They are collected and checked by the school secretary on a weekly basis. Attendance from each class register is entered on a computer database at the end of each week.

Class teachers complete a pupil absence note which is sent to the office daily.

3. First day contact

3.1 Guidelines on school attendance stress that the single most effective initiative designed to improve rates of attendance is the implementation of first day response to pupil absence. It has the effect of:-

- Showing the school is concerned about pupil welfare,
- Establishing the reason for absence at an early stage,
- Preventing unauthorised absence,
- Encouraging communication between parents and school.

3.2 The school operates a first day contact policy as follows. Parents are expected to contact school before 10.00 am. In the event of no contact being made the school will initiate the following actions;

- parents are telephoned by the school secretary during the morning.
- Absence will be added to the school's online safe-guarding tool, CPOMS.
- The outcome of the conversation is recorded and passed to the teacher verbally by Office Staff.
- If there is no reply after two telephone calls or the family is not on the telephone, emergency contacts will be followed up.
- If there are safeguarding concerns relating to the unexplained absence then the EWO will be informed and/or the police.
- If the family do not then contact the school personally, by telephone or by letter, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that all contact details held by the office are current.

4. Follow up

4.1 Registers are reviewed weekly by the School Secretary to ensure that attendance problems are noticed at the earliest possible opportunity. The following may suggest further investigation is required:-

- Unexplained absences
- Continual broken weeks
- Patterns of non-attendance on specific days
- Attendance below 95%
- Repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- Persistent lateness (arriving after the register has closed at 9.10 and either 13:10 or 13:40 for an afternoon session)

4.2 The school secretary in the first instance ascertains the reason for the absence. If this is not possible or an unsatisfactory explanation is given, the principal is alerted and a referral is made to the Education Welfare Officer.

4.3 The Principal regularly reviews attendance data and where there is a concern over high level of absence a letter will be sent home to invite the parents/carers into a meeting to discuss the situation and put a plan in place to improve attendance.

4.4 If attendance does not improve a referral is made to the EWO.

5. Medical appointments

- 5.1** The school discourages medical/dental appointments during school time. The following statement will be printed in the school newsletter at least once a term.

“Parents are asked not to arrange non-emergency, non-urgent medical/dental or other appointments during the school day.”

6. Holidays during term time

- 6.1** The school will not authorise any requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. From the 1st September 2013 an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed reference to holidays and the ten-day period. The school follows the DCC guidance which upholds the current Government guidance.

6.2 Authorised absence

- 6.3** Pupils will only be granted authorised absence by the school; in exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions or other unavoidable causes. Requests for extended absence from school will be taken to the school’s ECM Committee.

7. Acknowledging good attendance

- 7.1** Staff constantly praise and offer positive encouragement to children who are regularly punctual and have good attendance.
- 7.2** Children who achieve a full school year without absence receive a special certificate.
- 7.3** The classes with the best attendance records will be acknowledged and praised in assemblies and newsletters
- 7.4** Parents will be written to if their child achieves 100% attendance in a school year.

8. Punctuality

- 8.1** Teaching staff monitor the punctuality of children.
- 8.3** A “late book” is kept in the office to record the date, time and reason for being late. This late book is reviewed half termly by the head teacher and regular lateness is followed up with parents in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer if required

9. The Law

- 9.1** Parents of children aged five to sixteen, whose children are registered at school, must make sure that their child attends school regularly.
- 9.2** Devon Children and Young People's Services employs Education Welfare Officers (EWO) who monitor school attendance and help parents meet their responsibilities. EWOs work closely with schools. If your child is not attending school regularly an EWO may visit you.
- 9.3** Devon Children and Young People's Services can prosecute parents in a magistrate's court. This could result in you and your partner being fined up to £2,500 or sent to prison for up to three months (or both) for each child who is not going to school. Alternatively Children's Services in Devon may have to seek an Education Supervision Order. This means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to you and your child.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy has been written and reviewed with due regard to the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that no member of our school community suffers discrimination or disadvantage regardless of age, race, gender reassignment, disability, civil partnership, religion and belief (or lack of belief), pregnancy and maternity, gender or sexual orientation.

Appendix 1

What is an authorised absence?

- Genuine illness
- Hospital and dental appointments if they cannot be made outside school hours.
- Days of religious observance

What is an unauthorised absence?

The absence will be marked as unauthorised if your child is kept off school to:

- Look after the house or other members of the family
- To go shopping
- To visit relatives
- Because it is their birthday
- Because of the weather (unless the school is closed)
- Because they got up late
- Because they don't want to go
- Because the parent has failed to let the school know the reason for the absence.
- ALL holidays

Appendix 2

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

Name of Child _____

Your child was absent from school today and we did not receive a message from you indicating the reason why.

Please telephone school, write or call in at the earliest opportunity confirming the reason for absence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Rob Meech
Principal