



Pupil Attendance Policy

(No 70)

Responsibility for policy update lies with the Head Teacher.

To be reviewed by Curriculum Committee a minimum of every **3 Years**.

Dates Adopted
Reviewed Nov 12
02.07.24

St. Patrick's Primary & Nursery Catholic Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy



“Christ be with me and Christ be within me”

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School strives to promote the education and development of our children in an atmosphere of love and mutual respect by encouraging each person to see themselves as a valued member of a wider community who can act independently and make a positive contribution for the good of all.

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is important for a pupils' education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. It is essential that the school is informed of the reasons for absence on the first day of absence. Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy and all absence figures have to be reported to the Local Authority (LA), the Government Department for Education, as well as to the schools Governing Body. Attendances are also recorded on a pupils' annual school report. It is important that pupils arrive on time for school, as a prompt start to the day establishes the learning activities for the day. Parents/guardians must ensure that they have read the School's attendance policy in respect of authorised absence and unauthorised absences as poor attendance has a detrimental effect on a pupil's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/guardians, pupils and teachers all have their part to play in ensuring this happens.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under section 44 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter / message will the absence be authorised.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving attendance at St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents, governors and all members of staff.

PUPILS

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the class teacher and, if required. Attendance certificates are given to the class with the highest attendance percentage every week. There is also a prize for individuals who have the highest attendance at the end of the year.

PARENTS/CARERS

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents must notify the school on the first day of absence. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parents. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, making specialist appointments for their children during school hours. Holidays should not be taken in term-time.

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

SCHOOL

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

The Role of the School Management

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear about the procedures.

1. The school staff has an obligation to enquire about the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist upon written evidence for any such occurrences.
2. There is, likewise, an equally important task for the staff to report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher.
3. The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on authorised and unauthorised absence and enters this information on a termly return.
4. The School emphasises to parents the importance of full attendance for a satisfactory delivery of the National Curriculum to each pupil and for testing procedures.
5. At the end of each school year, attendance figures for every individual pupil are put on the end of year report along with the number of unauthorised absences for that year, hence, parents are made fully aware of their responsibilities and know that the school is keeping a long term record.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

There are two types of absences:

Authorised Absence:

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". The Headteacher approves authorised absences. Examples of authorised absence are:

- genuine illness
- unavoidable specialist appointment (Parents/guardians are encouraged to make specialist appointments outside school hours)
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Unauthorised Absence:

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Caring for a family member
- Holidays in term time
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The Education Inclusion Team may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Parents should be aware that it is for the school to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A letter, or other communication, does not in itself authorise an absence.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils' miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. For very exceptional circumstances you may write a letter to the Head Teacher asking permission for the time off. (Cheaper holidays are not exceptional circumstances). The overall attendance pattern of the pupil will also be taken into account when deciding whether to grant for exceptional circumstance. No leave will be authorised during exam periods. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right. Absence taken and not authorised could be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine.

ABSENCE, EXPECTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Parents should notify the school, either by telephone, or in person, on the first day of absence, giving the reason and, if possible, likely duration of the absence. All telephone messages will be kept in the register.

If a pupil is absent and no notification is received, on the first day of absence a member of staff will attempt to contact the home, as soon as possible after 9.00am. Parents are asked to ensure all contact details are up to date. If no message or contact is made by 9:30am we will then message parents regarding the possibility of a Home Visit. By 10:00am if no contact has still been made a Home Visit will be carried out (please see Home Visit Policy). This is to ensure the safety of the child and family.

LATENESS

All pupils are expected to be in school by 8:50am. A pupil receives a late mark if they are not in their classroom by the time the class register is taken at 8:50 am. Any pupil arriving later than 8:50 a.m. should enter the school via the main entrance and report to the School Office. The parent or guardian should give a reason for the lateness. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Parents/guardians of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness are reminded about the importance of good time-keeping by sending a "good timekeeping reminder" message. Parents/carers will be asked to visit school to discuss the problem if they have five or more lates in a half-term. We also operate a late register at the end of the day. This register is also monitored and parents/carers will be asked to visit school to discuss any concerns.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos is to demonstrate to pupils that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.

Attendance data will be monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy practice.

Attendance certificates are given to the class with the highest attendance percentage every week.

Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The class teacher will monitor and review these targets.

Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school website, parents' evening etc) of the importance of regular attendance.

Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.

The Head Teacher will make a report to the school's governing body on attendance in the head teacher's report.

Members of staff will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

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

the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;

the address of the new school;

the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Entitlement Service.