

St Georges Catholic School Attendance Policy

Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parents responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to

- set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- clarify the role of the parents/carer

The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents

- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- Share good practice with other schools
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus
- The attendance booklet is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work
- Attendance certificates to reward children for high attendance

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- Provide a note when the child returns from an absence due to sickness. This should be on the first day of the child's return to school
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMs Attendance Module. Class teachers complete an OMR sheet twice daily and return it to the office.

Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes.

M	:	sickness; medical or dental appointments
L	:	late before registers closed
@	:	late after registers closed (with reasons)
C	:	other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
H	:	annual family holiday
N	:	no reason yet provided for absence
V	:	school journey
R	:	religious activities
E	:	exclusion
T	:	temporary absence

Registers close at 9.15 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, approved holiday, absence following the death of a close member of the family.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill
- The parent cannot get the child to school
- The child is taken on a shopping trip

- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child is more than half an hour late without a satisfactory explanation

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment. When a child returns from a period of absence due to a sickness, a note must be provided. The class teacher dates and signs all notes in order to complete the weekly absence report.

The school will telephone the child's home to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school on the first day of absence.

If a child has been absent for 3 days without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the Education Welfare Officer about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 80% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the EWO during one of their regular visits.

Holidays

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. The law states that schools have the discretion to grant up to 10 days authorised holiday absence in a school year if:

- The parent the child normally lives with applies in advance for the holiday, and
- There are special circumstances for the holiday

A holiday request form must be obtained from the school office. Upon receipt of this form, which must be completed well before the holiday commences, up to ten days may be authorised at the school's discretion, in special circumstances as outlined below. Please see Wiltshire Council's Leaflet 'Holidays in Term Time' for more detailed guidance.

- Personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during and after a crisis.

All other circumstances will be unauthorised.

Parents are asked to reflect on the affect that this time out of school will have on their child's learning when requesting such authorisation.

If a pupil goes on holiday without permission from the Headteacher, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the EWO will be informed.

Punctuality

The school day begins at 9.15 a.m. when the register will be taken. Children may come in and work on quiet classroom tasks after 9.00 a.m. Children arriving after 9.15 a.m. should report to the school office.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class.

If a child arrives more than half an hour late, with no reason given by their parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an

arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

Medical Appointments

Parents must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.