



# All Souls' Catholic PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy JUNE 2022

<b><u>Review Programme</u></b>	
<b>Approved by Governors at:</b>	Finance and Sustainability Committee meeting 15/06/2022
<b>Date for next review:</b>	June 2023
<b>Signed – Chair of Governors</b>	<i>S. Langford</i>
<b>Signed – Headteacher</b>	<i>A. Wade</i>

## **1. INTRODUCTION and AIMS**

All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must, by law attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress.

*Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. (DFE School Attendance Nov 2016)*

All Souls Catholic Primary School aims to work together with parents and pupils in order to ensure that every child achieves high levels of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We expect all children from Nursery to Year 6, providing they are fit and healthy, to attend school 100% of the time. Improving attendance at All Souls Catholic Primary is a key aim of the school. Individual absences and punctuality issues will be acted upon quickly and efficiently.

We aim to address attendance in a positive manner and always to celebrate success such as 100% attendance or recognising improvements in attendance. We believe that early intervention is key and therefore we challenge poor attendance early within the academic year but also early in a child's school life with Nursery and Reception non-attendance analysed, monitored and tackled alongside the rest of the school.

All Souls School works closely with the Children and Family Service and will inform them of any pupil whose attendance or punctuality is a serious cause for concern. The Local Authority can apply to the courts for an education supervision order, and where necessary, they can prosecute parents.

## **2. LEGISLATION and GUIDANCE**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(May 2022\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **School**

All Souls Catholic Primary School expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive on time. School will monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality daily and will inform parents if the child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern. School will work closely with parents and will offer support to families both at home and in school if needed in order to ensure good attendance and punctuality. The School will:

- follow up unexplained absences as soon as possible.
- remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, in the Home School agreement and at new parent induction evenings.
- publish your child's percentage attendance on their mid-year and annual school reports.
- analyse individual attendance on a regular basis.
- let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality.
- Monitor all children whose attendance falls below 95%
- Weekly tracking of children classified as 'persistently absent' and notification to parents of the need to improve this
- Where 'persistently absent' children's attendance does not show improvement, parents will be invited into school to discuss strategies for rapid improvement and the potential implementation of a formal attendance plan
- At this point the school will be unable to authorise absence due to illness without medical
- Discussion with the school's EHAC any children whose attendance is a concern
- ensure school staff set the example of good attendance and punctuality
- seek support from Local Authority in arranging tuition for children whose absence is long term and where they will miss extended periods of school.

#### **Parents**

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed, fed and ready to learn. Parents who permit absence from school without a good reason commit an offence in law which may result in prosecution or penalty fine. Parents must:

- understand the daily registration procedure, the importance of punctuality and the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- not book holidays, trips or breaks during term time.
- ensure your child arrives in time to be seated in the classroom before the close of registration (8:45am), having had a good breakfast and with the equipment they need for the day.
- contact the school by 9.30am on the first morning of your child's absence giving the reason and indicating when the child will/is likely to return. Ideally, this should be done by completing the absence reporting form on the school website.
- keep the school updated if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- promote the importance of attendance to children in discussion and through ensuring they come to school unless they are really unwell
- arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks

- understand that, on occasions, children experience symptoms which present as illness (upset tummy, headaches etc.) which are actually a result of anxiety, and that the best way to prevent this becoming a bigger issue is to contact and work with school, including bringing the child to school, to best support them

### **School Attendance Governor**

The school has a named 'attendance Governor' who works with the head teacher to monitor and challenge poor attendance. They will review all applications for exceptional leave during term time and work with the school in issuing letters to parents to raise concerns over attendance and/or punctuality.

The school attendance Governor is **Caroline Quinn**

## **4. CATEGORISING ABSENCE**

**Absence can be categorised as follows:**

### **Authorised Absence:**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has, in exceptional circumstances, has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Please note that the school will never authorise absence for holidays where the school has been notified in retrospect or school process has not been followed.

Illness - In most cases completion of the online absence notification form on the school website will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where an illness continues beyond 3 days absence and when there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will also be the case if a child is classified as 'persistently absent'. In these cases the School may ask the School Nurse to support the pupil in an attempt to improve school attendance.

Medical/Dental Appointments - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day; however, we understand that this is not always possible. If pupils do have a medical appointment during the school day, they should attend school for part of the day and parents must show the appointment card to the school either as they leave school or on their return.

Off Site Educational Activity - This includes an organised trip or visit, a residential trip organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Exceptional Leave of Absence - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances. Parents should put the request in writing via the request form on the school website, giving details as to why the request has been made. It will then be considered by the Headteacher and Attendance Governor in due course. If they decide insufficient notice has been given or if the child is absent without waiting for an official decision, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. (*see 'Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests' below*)

Exclusion (No alternative provision made) - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

Religious Observance: All Souls acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or

weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

#### Other Examples of Authorised Absence:

- Attendance at sporting / music / dance exams or events
- Dual registration with another school

#### Unauthorised Absence

Late Arrival - Children must be in the classroom for registration at 8.45am. Pupils arriving between 8.45 and 9.00am must report to the Admin Office, they will be marked as present but will receive a late mark.

The register closes at 9.00am; pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as 'late after the close of register' and is an unauthorised. This will count as an absence for that school session. Pupils arriving after the close of register must be accompanied by an adult who must sign them in the late book and give a reason for the late arrival.

Unexplained Absence - Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted by the school.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave - Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

The Governors at All Souls Catholic Primary School will not typically authorise family holidays in term time.

#### Unauthorised absence

If a child is absent without good reason (unauthorised absence) or persistently absent over a prolonged period, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice of £60.00 (if a child has 10 unauthorised absences in a term).
- Prosecute through the Magistrates Court – If found guilty you could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court may also give you a Parenting Order.

#### Other Examples of Unauthorised Absence -

- Keeping a child off school because they didn't want to attend
- Keeping a child off school to take them shopping/have a haircut
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Keeping a child off school because it is theirs or another family member's birthday
- Keeping a child off school to attend a family day out
- Keeping a child off school because a sibling is not attending school

#### Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests

Law states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If parents wish to take their child out of school, and consider their circumstances to be exceptional, they should complete a 'Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence' electronic form, which is available on the school website. This should ideally be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the planned absence, although in the case of bereavement we appreciate this may not be possible.

On receipt of the completed form, the Headteacher/Attendance Governor may invite parents in to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact this may have on their child's education. The child's current attendance figure will also be considered; if a child's attendance for the current academic year is below 94%, the school will be unable to grant authorised absence. If leave is granted, the Headteacher/Attendance Governor will determine the number of school days a child can be absent. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. *Holidays do not constitute exceptional circumstances.*

For all requests, the Attendance Governor will reply to all applications via email stating whether or not the absence has been agreed. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

If leave has not been granted, the reason for not authorising will be clearly stated. If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence and the date the child is expected back to school will be clearly stated.

If a parent takes their child from School without permission from the Headteacher or if the child fails to return on the agreed date then the School will inform the parent that a referral is being made to the Local Authority; this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 being issued or legal action being taken against the parent, increasing to £120 if payment is not made within 21 days.

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% or more of education.

Research shows a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Each half term parents and carers of children with less than 92% attendance will receive a letter from the school, informing them how many sessions they have missed and indicating the detrimental effect absence can have on their child's progress.

Where parents or carers fail or refuse to engage with support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the School will consider the use of legal sanctions. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child in school, he or she is guilty of an offence.

Local Authorities can use various legal powers, including:

- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- School Attendance Order
- Penalty Notice
- Prosecution If taken to court each person with parental responsibility is liable to a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

## **5. STRATEGIES for PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

The school actively tries to encourage and promote good attendance through a number of means:

- Providing information in weekly newsletters about whole school and class attendance
- Celebrating the class with the highest attendance in weekly Superstars assembly
- Issuing regular letters reminding of the importance of good attendance
- Recognising where progress in attendance/punctuality is achieved and celebrating this

- Providing awards/certificates at the end of the school year for those who have maintained 100% attendance
- Reporting on individual attendance on mid-year and end of year reports
- Actively tracking and recording attendance of individuals, classes and key groups
- Sending letters out to parents where attendance is causing a concerns
- Using additional agencies, e.g. LA, EHAC to support where attendance is a concern

## **6. ATTENDANCE MONIROTING**

Attendance is monitored by the school's admin staff on a daily basis. If a child is not in school and the school has not received information from the parent identifying why the child is absent by 9:30am, the admin team will make attempts to contact the parents. In the first instance, this will be via telephone and if unsuccessful, via email.

Attendance is monitored formally by the school every two weeks. This is carried out by the school's well-being assistant. As part of the monitoring, all children who are classed as persistently absent will be tracked as well as those whose attendance falls below 94%. Whole school attendance and the attendance of key groups will be compared against nationally available figures. The school use FFT Aspire Attendance Tracker and information on the schools MIS as a basis for statistics.

The headteacher will review the outcomes of each fortnightly monitoring and agree strategies to support improvement of children whose attendance is a concern.

Attendance, persistent absence and punctuality are reported to the governing board on a termly basis.