

St Clare's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

St Clare's Catholic Primary School recognises that good attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We are very proud of our attendance and have worked positively with parents to ensure the vast majority of our pupils attend school regularly and maximise their learning.

This policy underpins our school ethos and aims:

- To maximise attendance of all pupils, ensuring the widest range of learning opportunities.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Attendance Officer and Local Authority.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school on time each day, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence, or later arrival, disrupts teaching routines and so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote and celebrate good attendance with a weekly Attendance Award per class and end of term awards for 100% and 99%. £5 vouchers are given at the end of a year for 100% attendance for the full year.
- Report to parents/carers about each child's attendance each term and in the end of year report.
- Text messages are sent to parents of children with above average attendance and those children whose attendance is improving.

ABSENCE

Every half day absence is recorded as either Authorised or Unauthorised and this is reported to the Local Authority and DfE. Illness, from time to time, cannot be avoided but any other absence during term time will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances' and at the Head Teachers' discretion. Medical/dental appointments should be made outside of school hours: where this is not possible, an appointment card/letter will be needed in order to authorise the absence.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

There is no entitlement to leave of absence in term time and no leave will be authorised unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. All applications for leave of absence must be made to the Head Teacher at least 10 days in advance of the required leave and the 'exceptional circumstances' clearly outlined on the application form.

In making a decision, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The exceptional circumstances to be considered.
- The time of year/term.
- Whether the child will miss preparation for tests or the actual tests.
- The child's previous attendance record over the past twelve months.

If an application for leave of absence is refused, the Head Teacher will inform parents. Teachers will not provide work to be done during a leave of absence as the vital teaching input will have been missed.

UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. If a child is removed for a leave of absence without authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Educational Welfare Service who have the authority to issue a Warning Notice and, in repeated cases, a Fixed Penalty Notice.
2. Where a pupil does not return to St Clare's Catholic Primary immediately after the end of a period of authorised absence, then the whole of the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
3. In both of the above instances, parents may be advised by letter of the need to make an appointment to speak with the Head Teacher before the child is returned to school.
4. If a pupil has been continuously absent from St Clare's RC Primary for a period of 4 weeks, and both the Governing Body and our welfare Officer have failed after a

reasonable enquiry to locate the pupil, or the pupil has failed to return from unauthorised leave, then the pupil will be regarded as 'Missing from Education' and their names will be removed from the Admissions Register.

The effect of the removal of a pupil's name from the Admissions Register will be that when the pupil tries to return to St Clare's RC Primary, he or she will no longer automatically have a place.

Parents are free to re-apply for admission but places are not guaranteed as St Clare's RC vacancies are filled very quickly.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- All attendance is monitored via a meeting with head teacher, school business manager and administrator every Monday morning. There is follow up texts, letters and meetings as attendance is categorised into traffic lights each term, throughout the year. Parents who fail to improve their child's attendance could be referred to our Educational Welfare Officer.
- If a child is absent due to illness, parents should notify school by telephone on the first day of absence. Attendance is carefully monitored by our school administrators who will follow up any unexplained absences on the first day.
- Attendance definitions will be reviewed annually in line with DfE guidance.

PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss vital teaching and information. Pupils arriving late can also disrupt lessons. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and beyond.

Monitoring Lateness:

The school day starts at **8.50 am** and we expect all children to be in their classrooms and ready to learn when the bell rings. Registers are completed by 9am

Children arriving after this time enter school via the main entrance with a parent, have their names recorded for monitoring purposes and are marked late in the register. A reason must be given by the parent for their lateness. Children's lateness is also monitored via a weekly Monday morning attendance meeting.

Punctuality is monitored weekly and where this becomes a concern parents are informed via a phoncall. If lateness continues, parents are invited to come into school to discuss this further and plan actions for improvement. An action plan will be made to support the parents in helping their child arrive on time for school.