



St. Patrick's R.C. Primary School



Attendance Policy		
Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2018	September 2019	M Ryan

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Statement of Intent

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it must therefore be a high priority of the school, governors, LA, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

The aim of the school is to facilitate their student's regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all their students.

Parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home- school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

School Attendance the Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Education Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amending Regulation 3(2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

Pupil Registration Regulations 1995 (amended) gives schools discretionary powers to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time.

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers' must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the tutor's role. They have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of students in the tutor group, for collecting notes explaining absences, for maintaining an accurate register and for contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality.

Stockton-on-Tees Local Education Authority requires all teachers to use the symbols shown in Table 1 for marking registers.

Manuscript registers must be kept in ink and corrections made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable (ie. definitely no "Tipp-Ex").

In accordance with current legislation, each Form/Class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9.10am and 1.10pm and the information will then be returned to the school office.

It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place, but before the close of the registers.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Students will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

It is school's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival. Working with parents on attendance and timekeeping should initially lie with the class teacher, who should seek advice and support from a Senior Leader and/or Parent Support Adviser.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the office and a record entered into the late book. The pupil's record in the register will be amended as appropriate.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival

stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep their Senior leadership team informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

Registration Procedure

Registers will be completed as quickly as convenient, preceding both daily sessions. Only 5 minutes of the school day have been allocated for the registration procedure.

Registers will be returned to the school office following this registration period.

Pupils present will be so marked by a diagonal line. Pupils not present will be so marked by an O.

Late

Pupils arriving at school after registration (09.10am) in the mornings must report to Mrs V Williams at the office who will adjust the entry in the class register also ensuring they have entered details in the 'late book' by applying a '@'. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration. This constitutes attendance for Health and Safety purposes but is an unauthorised absence for statistical purpose.

If a pupil fails to attend registration for the afternoon session, he or she will be marked as '@' if arriving after the close of registration.

An explanation note may authorise this absence, eg. visit to doctor/dentist. Otherwise it will be treated as unauthorised.

Absence

Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are all acceptable.

If after three weeks no satisfactory reason has been given the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED absence is included in Table 1.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does 'not, of itself, oblige the school to agree to it. If the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally- condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the Education Social Worker at an early opportunity.

An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary, on occasion, to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.

Key Points

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required, by law, to be in school.
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged. Working with parents is far more effective than dealing with a child who is late.
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly.
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not be accepted as reasons for absence.

Holidays

Parents do not have an automatic right to demand holidays for their children. Absences of more than 5 days in one academic year may only be granted in exceptional circumstances. However the governors have deemed that 5 days holiday absence should only be taken in exceptional circumstances – not 10 days.

Parents are urged strongly to avoid taking family holidays during term time. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance, the school may grant up to two weeks term-time absence in any academic year to go on a family holiday. Apart from this, leave in term time can only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Occasionally, holidays of more than two weeks to visit family living overseas may be planned. Parents are urged to discuss with school staff, the most appropriate time of year and point in the child's educational career for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.

Reporting Absence

How - systems in place.

Attendance Procedures

Intervention at School Level Stage

1 – Monitor

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

- 1.1 The Class Teacher or Form Tutor has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class group and for collecting notes explaining absences, maintaining an accurate register and contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality. Parents can be contacted by text in the first instance if a child is absent and no reason is immediately given,
- 1.2 If a pupil is absent for three days and there has been no contact from home, then a standard letter should be sent home. If pupils have a telephone number, then a phone call may be made.
- 1.3 The Class Teacher can do much to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. If a teacher becomes concerned about absence, then the pupil should be referred to the Head Teacher, Senior Leader or Attendance Co-ordinator.

Stage 2 - Attendance Concerns

- 2.1 Home should be contacted, preferably by phone or a home visit by the Attendance Co-ordinator or other authorised school personnel, or by letter if this is the only option
- 2.2 A record should be kept of all contact and conversations.
- 2.3 Parents/carers should be encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement.
- 2.4 The Attendance Co-ordinator should discuss the pupil with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor and, where possible, see the parent. It is important to establish the reasons for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc. The parent should be given a target for the pupil's attendance, which is higher than their normal attendance rate.
- 2.5 A date for review of attendance should be set, no more than 4 weeks later.
- 2.6 If attendance has improved, then a letter of commendation should be sent home and pupil returns to STAGE 1.
- 2.7 If attendance has not improved, then options may include:
 - (i) Contact home to discuss the review and set a further review date.

(ii) Discuss with the parent areas of concerns and where other support might be appropriate.

2.8 The Attendance Co-ordinator will prioritise the list of pupils to be referred to the ESW.

A Reminder: Only school may authorise a pupil's absence. All absences must be explained by the pupil's parents/carers.

Referral to Education Social Worker

Details of the procedure followed by the Education Social Worker may be found in the Local Education Authority's Attendance Procedures Document.

When making a referral to the school's Education Social Worker, it is important that the following information is included:

- Action taken to date by the school.
- A print out of the pupil's attendance.
- Parent's/pupil's attitudes towards school and the school's intervention.
- Parental reasons for non-attendance.
- Action taken by school to resolve any identified problems.
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school.
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

Roles and Responsibilities Pupils

We expect that students:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence. .
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.

☐

Attendance Clerk - Add individual school's description Form Tutors

Attendance Co-ordinator Senior

Manager

Governor Monitoring
System

Reward Systems

Individual school's systems for rewarding good attendance.

Additional Strategies

Eg.
Governors Attendance Panel. Attendance
Conference.

Symbols for Marking Register

Present

Present	/
Home & Hospital Teaching	B
Present part-time/temporary education off-site/Support Unit	B
Educational Visit	V
Work Experience	W
Interview	I
Late before close of registration	L
Approved Sporting Activity	P

Authorised Absence

Hospital, medical, dental, pregnancy	M
Annual Parental Holiday	H
Religious Festivals	R
Exclusions	E
Study Leave	S
Traveller Absence	T
Other circumstances (reason must be recorded by form tutor)	C

Unauthorised Absence

No reason provided/truancy from school	O
Late after the close of registration	@
Reason not yet provided	N

Symbols used but not counted in Figures

Pupils not in school – Staff Only	X
School closed for Holiday	#
Enforced School Closure	Y
Attendance not required	!

Headteacher:	M. Ryan	Date:	September 2018
Chair of Governing Body:	G. Wilson	Date:	September 2019