

**ST ETHELBERT’S CATHOLIC**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

**Attendance and Holiday in Term Time Policy**

**2024**

**Date of Review: July 2024**

**Date of Next Review: July 2025**

**Attendance / Holiday in Term Time Policy**

We are a caring faith school that aspires to providing the very highest quality teaching for your child within our nurturing Catholic community. With Jesus at the heart of everything we do, we live out our mission statement:

**Learning, achieving and growing together with Jesus**

Our aim as educators is to instil a lifelong love of learning in our pupils, coupled with excellent progress and attainment for all, in a safe and supportive environment. We want our pupils to leave our school as confident, resilient learners who are fully-equipped with all the skills necessary for 21st Century life.

Pupils are supported in their learning by all our staff who will bring out the very best in every child. We believe that every child has the capacity to succeed and we aim for the very highest standards. We recognise each of our pupils as a unique and gifted individual who has much to offer the world, and strive to develop the skills and talents of each one. Our emphasis on teamwork, collaboration and acceptance allows our pupils to operate in an environment of mutual respect and dignity for all.

Every member of our staff is committed to the personal, spiritual, emotional and academic growth and development of our pupils. Children at St Ethelbert’s are both supported and challenged in order that they are able to thrive and achieve their full potential as a valued member of the school and wider community.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* fostering a shared understanding of the importance of good attendance across the whole-school community
* Promoting good attendance and punctuality
* Setting high expectations for attendance - positively reinforcing full or improved attendance and intervening where attendance falls below 97%
* Acting swiftly to reduce lateness, absence, persistent absence and severe absence, with a specific focus on immediate support for vulnerable learners
* Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
* Establish protocols to ensure that attendance issues are addressed early and effectively
* Building strong relationships with parents and carers to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school, engaging and involving families in a proactive and positive way to sustain high attendance and to support and challenge parents/carers where attendance falls below 97%

# Learning:

# Pupils’ enjoyment of, and ability to participate fully in their education is of paramount importance to us as a School. Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling. Regular absence seriously affects learners’ learning and progress over time, leading to poorer outcomes, which can inhibit life chances and opportunities. Department for Education (2016) research shows a direct relationship between the attendance of learners and their outcomes at the end of primary school or secondary school: put simply, the more days learners go to school, the better they do. Research also shows us that schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance have better overall attainment and behaviour.

# Safeguarding:

**Schools have a safeguarding duty under section175 Education Act 2022 to investigate an unexplained absence.**

# Pupils may be at risk of harm if they are not in school regularly. Learners who are missing from school are at significant risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, underachieving, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. We will do everything we can to ensure our learners are safe including as per guidance in KCSIE 2023 schools where reasonably possible asking for more than one emergency contact per child that is registered with the school. As such having more than one emergency contact may mean these are used to support attendance where it is not possible to make contact with parent / carer including when addressing concerns if a child is missing from education.

Each School’s Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee is responsible for:

* Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
* Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
* Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
* Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
* Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
* Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher (Mrs Fiona Maynard)

The headteacher is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school
* Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
* Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader (Mrs Joanne Rodrigues)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

* Leading attendance across the school
* Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
* Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
* Having an oversight of data analysis
* Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
* Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
* Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The school attendance officer (Ms Maggie Brennan)

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

* Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
* Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
* Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
* Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
* Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

All class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

School office staff will take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

* Make sure their child attends every day on time
* Call the school to report their child’s absence using the school’s agreed systems on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
* Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
* Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
* Book family holidays during school holidays
* Engage with any support offered to address any barriers to their child’s attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

* attend school punctually every day
* engage with any support offered by the school to help them overcome any barriers to attendance.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance and absence levels via letter at the end of every half term. A breakdown of all individual absences are shared with parents during parent consultations (October/February) as well as in your child’s end of year report.

# Strategies for promoting attendance

Breakfast club is offered by the school as another opportunity to encourage pupils to be in school and be on time. This service is run by school staff and is available to all pupils. There is a fee for this service, however the school subsidies’ the breakfast club to ensure that it is financially viable for parents.

Assemblies are held at least three times a week in which children are spoken to regularly about the importance of attendance. Children are also rewarded with certificates for their work during the week in maths, reading and writing. These can only be given if children work consistently well across the week.

**Rewarding Good Attendance**

We expect every child to come to school on time every day.

The Welfare Officer ensures that all class teachers have a copy of their pupil’s attendance record weekly. The Welfare Officer must highlight any concerns (e.g. less than 95% attendance) as well as successes (e.g. 100% attendance).

Certificates will be awarded to classes with the highest attendance at the end of each term alongside an additional reward of the welfare officers choosing.

The class with the overall highest attendance throughout the school year will receive a whole class reward. Children from other classes with 100% attendance will also join in the end of year celebration.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

* Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. For example, morning interventions are held for pupils every term by school staff to work on areas in maths and literacy across every year group.
* Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

* Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
* Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

To respond to persistent and severe absence, the school will seek to identify and address root causes. As there are a wide range of reasons for this occurring, the response will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, typical strategies will include:

* supporting the pupil and their family to understand the reasons that attendance is important and the possible implications of repeated absences
* enhanced monitoring of individual pupils where attendance is (or could be) an issue
* Letters home
* holding meetings with parents or carers to discuss concerns. Parents are advised to bring any evidence they have supporting the reason for absence.
* Attendance contracts
* offering specific pastoral support using the resources and staffing already available within the school
* working with external partners to address the underlying factors that are causing the absence
* issuing warning letters and fixed penalty notices;

An individual child whose attendance is under 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised) will be closely monitored by the welfare officer and designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, schools will consider the use of legal sanctions.

**Why attendance matters:**

1. If pupils are to achieve their potential, good attendance and punctuality are vital.

2. The link between attendance and achievement is well documented.

3. We want all our pupils to achieve the very best that they can, to develop the whole person and be the ‘best they can be’

**Punctuality:**

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually.

**What Parents/Carers can do:**

• Ensure pupils arrive on time each day, well equipped and in a fit state to learn. School starts at 8.50 a.m. for all pupils in Reception, KS1 and KS2. *[In exceptional circumstances start and finish times may need to be changed]*

• Registers close at 9.00am at which point your child will be given an unauthorised absence mark if they are not in school and have not given a valid reason.

• If you are aware that your child will be absent from school – please phone the school office on 01753 522048.

• If a child must attend a medical or dental appointment during school hours, then appointment cards must be shared before the event.

 • Inform the school if there is a problem that may affect your child’s attendance e.g. bereavement.

If absences are unexplained a telephone call home will be made on the day of the absence and a reason for the absence sought. If contact is not made, a follow up call will be made to all contacts to establish a reason for the absence. If contact is still not established, then a home visit will be conducted by the Welfare Officer and Pastoral Lead.

**All absences at the start and end of a term will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided to the school. Term dates are sent out at the beginning of an academic year to remind parents of the dates children are required to be in school.**

The Education Act 2004 states that all children of compulsory school age (5-16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/Carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends school every day. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

St. Ethelbert’s Catholic Primary School and Nursery welcomes the active support of parents/carers. The school seeks to develop an effective partnership between home and the school based on mutual understanding and trust. However, in some circumstances when nonattendance is below an acceptable level the school will liaise with the Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council and if necessary seek legal sanctions for non-school attendance.

**Parental Prosecution:**

When attendance is below an acceptable level and no reasonable explanation has been given, parents will be referred to the Local Authority who will be in contact with parents regarding their child’s attendance. This may result in a referral to Early Help/Family Support or a fine of up to £160 each time a referral is made.

Process of attendance meetings with parents:

All meetings with parents regarding attendance will be recorded and information regarding a child’s absence will be shared with the class teacher and Headteacher.

* If your child’s attendance is below 97% - 1st letter home
* If your child’s attendance is below 90% - 2nd letter and meeting with Welfare Officer and Pastoral lead
* If your child’s attendance is below 85% - meeting with Welfare officer and Deputy headteacher along with referral to Local Authority

Examples of how days missed affects % attendance rating:

 0 Days missed – 100% attendance

10 Days missed – 95% attendance

20 Days missed – 90% attendance

30 Days missed – 85% attendance

**Absence Codes:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed (present) |
| **K** | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending an approved educational activity |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity **OR PROVISION** approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence – Absent with Leave** |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (including maternity leave) |
| **C2** | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable | The school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school. |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made | The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness ( both physical and mental health related) |
| **J1** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **Q** | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements | The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10, 12 or 13 to make access arrangements to enable the pupil’s attendance at school and have failed to do so (classified as not a possible attendance) |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place |
| **X** | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | Schools can grant a leave of absence for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Y1** | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available | The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available. (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Y6** | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | The pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be: • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. |
| **Y7** | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other ‘unable to attend’ codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question (classed as not a possible attendance) |
| **Absent - Unauthorised absence** |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after 5 days) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised. |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

**If your child is absent from school, you must do the following:**

Parents should inform the school office of the reason for their child’s absence at the start of the school day. Notification can be made by phone or email.

**Parents must give a reason for the absence.**

**Authorised absence:** is absence with permission from the Headteacher; this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided e.g. ill health.

Medical and dental appointments, where possible should be made for after school or during school holidays. The school understands that this is not always possible, however, pupils should attend school prior to or following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day’s absence. Only half a day will be authorised for these appointments.

**Unauthorised absence:** is absence without permission from the Headteacher, this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences e.g. term time holiday or a birthday celebration. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10-week period will result in a penalty notice being issued.

**Holidays in Term Time:**

*A leave of absence request must be completed at least 2 weeks prior to the leave being taken. These are available upon request in the school office. You will also need to provide evidence of travel dates if requested by the Welfare officer.*

Under Department for Education guidelines, special leave can no longer be granted by the Head Teacher. Leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not count as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised. Under educational law, parents do not have the automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. The school holidays are published a year in advance and parents/cares are expected to arrange their family holidays during those times.

Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will be shared with the local authority and parents/carers will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each child concerned. These are on a per parent, per child basis as follows:

* **First offence: the first time a penalty notice is issues for an unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160 per parent per child to be paid with 28 days. This can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.**
* **Second offence: within 3 years of the first offence. The second time a penalty notice is issues for an unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160 per parent per child to be paid with 28 days. There is no reduction for early payment.**
* **Third offence onwards: within 3 years of the first offence. The third time a penalty notice is issues for a unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance, a penalty notice will NOT be issued and the case with be presented straight to the Magistrates court. Fines can be issued up to £2500 per parent per child. Cases founded to be guilty in court will be shown as a criminal record and can show up on DBS certificates due to ‘failure to safeguard a child’s education’.**

**Days of Religious Observance:**

Pupils may request leave of absence on days set apart by their religion for religious festivals. These absences must be notified in writing as soon as the date of the festival is known. A leave of absence form must be completed for the headteacher to view in advance.

**Interviews:**

When a pupil attends an interview or examination in connection with an application for a place at secondary school (The 11+), this absence will be recorded as authorised. Parents must notify the school of the date their child will be absent to take part in the said interview/exam.

**Off-Site Activities:**

These may be divided into two categories:

School directed (e.g. educational visits). School directed activities constitute authorised absences.

Activities particular to an individual pupil; e.g. music examination is authorised. It is reasonable to request evidence (e.g. a letter confirming the examination) in order to authorise this absence.

**Suspended Pupils:**

When a pupil has been temporarily suspended then the absence is regarded as authorised.

When a pupil has been permanently suspended, his or her absence will be treated as authorised whilst any review or appeal is in progress. At the end of the review or appeal process, if the suspension is confirmed then the pupil must be taken off roll.

**Registration and Lateness:**

All registers are marked at the start of the school day and after lunchtime for all pupils. Registers are marked electronically by the class teacher. The school office receives a copy of the register once it has been completed.

If a pupil arrives at school late then pupil (and accompanying parent) will sign in via the main school office using the InVentry system at the front desk as a reason must be provided. The InVentry system records the number of minutes late a pupil has arrived.

Absence and lateness are monitored by the School Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council.

**Letters to/meetings with parents regarding lateness:**

Staff in the school office will remind parents/pupils arriving late the importance of arriving at school on time. Absence and lateness are monitored by the office manager and school welfare officer.

Where a pupil is persistently late then a letter is sent home to parents, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Persistently late means more than two occasions in any two consecutive weeks or more than four occasions in any four consecutive weeks. The Welfare Officer is responsible for informing the Head Teacher of any possible exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances can only be approved by the Head Teacher.

If a pupil’s parents have received a letter regarding lateness and punctuality has not improved the Welfare Officer will arrange a meeting with the parent. At this meeting the school will stress the importance of punctuality and discuss with the parent’s reasons for lateness to see if any support can be offered. After the meeting the child’s punctuality will continue to be monitored.

If the child’s punctuality does not improve after a letter has been issued and a meeting has been held, then the matter will be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter.

The Welfare Officer will give the Head Teacher regular updates of parents receiving letters regarding punctuality and any meetings that are taking place with parents. In certain instances, it may be more appropriate for the Head Teacher to lead the meeting about punctuality. All letters to parents regarding punctuality will be copied to the child’s file. Records of all meetings will be recorded on CPOMS.

Class teachers must share the responsibility for encouraging good punctuality among their class by discussing the impact of frequent lateness on a child’s learning in class.

For more complex and ongoing concerns with regards to a child’s punctuality, the Pupil pastoral lead will be notified and asked to monitor concerns. The Pupil pastoral lead will then forward information of findings to the class teachers, Welfare Officer and Headteacher as well as record any notes or meetings on CPOMS.

The Headteacher reserves the right to accelerate the process directly to a meeting or referral to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority should a pupil’s punctuality or attendance not improve.

Lateness after the register is closed will result in an unathourised absence being recorded- this will be marked with a ‘U’ code on the register. 10 sessions over a 10 week period will result in a warning period or a penalty notice being issues on a per parent per child basis. Once these have been issued, the school will NOT reverse the decision.

**Children collected late:**

Parents must collect their child on time. If a parent is late **due to an emergency** then the child will be brought by the class teacher to the school office at 3.30pm.They will be handed over to the member of staff responsible for late pupils as the school office attempts to contact the child’s parents. The member of staff will record the child’s name in the late collection book. If the child has still not been collected by 4.00pm then the child will be handed over to the care of the Headteacher or the Deputy Head Teacher.

If a parent is more than 45 minutes late, has not left a message with the school and cannot be contacted then the Headteacher or Deputy Head Teacher should may consider contacting the Attendance Service for advice. If they are not available, then social services will be contacted and if they are not available, then the matter will be escalated to the police.

The child must not be allowed to leave school with anyone other than the parent or the adult the parent has nominated on his/her behalf.

If a parent is late to collect their child from an after school club then the procedure above will be followed. The after school club place will be cancelled if a parent collects late on 2 or more occasions.

If a parent is continually late collecting their child then a meeting will be arranged between the Welfare Officer and the parents. Initially this meeting is likely to involve the Pupil pastoral lead but if it continues then the Headteacher will become involved.

**Collecting children early from school:**

**(Illness, medical and dental appointments)**

Permission for medical or dental appointments is given if the appointments cannot be made outside school hours or during school holidays. Parents must bring the appointment card when requesting a leave of absence. A copy is made and added to the child’s records. If no appointment card or letter can be produced, this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils will sign out using the InVentry system for any appointments or if they have been collected early.

Pupils must not leave the site unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult and have been signed out.

**Exceptional Circumstances:**

Only truly exceptional circumstances are authorised through authorised absence; e.g. an older brother or sister’s graduation/family bereavement and these will be recorded as compassionate leave.

The Headteacher will sign off every leave of absence request to determine if the leave it authorised or unauthorised.

All requests for exceptional leave must be done by completing a ‘Leave of absence’ request at least 2 week prior to the date of leave.

The school responds sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or major life events. We treat each case individually, however compassionate leave is typically given for a maximum of 2 days.

**School governor for attendance:**

The schools named linked governors for care, guidance and support is Miss Catherine Hayes and Mrs Margaret Matthews.

**Review and Monitoring:**

The Local Academy Committee will review and monitor this policy in agreement with our schedule or in response to changes in legislation.