



# ST ETHELBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

## Attendance and Holiday in Term Time Policy 2022-2023

**Date of Review: May 2022**  
**Date of Next Review: May 2023**

## Attendance / Holiday in Term Time Policy

### 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. It is not permitted to start a term late or finish a term early. 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.

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

### Responsibilities:

The Education Act 2004 states that all children of compulsory school age (five to sixteen) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/Carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly.

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.

### **Safeguarding:**

The school has a statutory responsibility to safeguard the welfare and safety of its pupils. Monitoring attendance and/or patterns of attendance is part of this safeguarding responsibility.

### **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 £120 each time a referral is made.

### **REASONS FOR 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 isn't 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.

**Holidays in Term Time:** Under Department for Education guidelines, special leave can no longer be sanctioned 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.

Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will be notified to the local authority and parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each child concerned. Time out of school during term time will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances e.g. a bereavement – every case will be dealt with on a personal basis and will be dependent on the child's previous attendance record as well as the reason for absence.

*A leave of absence request must be completed 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.*

### **Registration and Lateness:**

1. All registers are marked at the start of the school day and after lunchtime for all pupils.
2. Registers are marked electronically by the class teacher. The school office receives an electronic copy of the register once it has been completed.
3. If a pupil arrives at school late then pupil (and accompanying parent) should come to the school office. The parent must sign their child in using the InVentry system at the front desk and provide a reason for the lateness. 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:**

1. Staff in the school office will remind parents/pupils arriving late the importance of arriving at school on time.
2. Absence and lateness are monitored by the office manager and school welfare officer.
3. 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.
4. If a pupil's parents have received a letter regarding lateness and punctuality has not improved the school Welfare Officer should arrange a meeting with the parent. At this meeting the school should 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 should be monitored. If the child's punctuality does not improve then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter.
5. If a parent is unable to make the appointment set for the above meeting then another appointment should be offered. If a parent is still not able to attend this meeting, then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter. Parents will be informed in writing that this will happen.
6. 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.
7. All letters to parents regarding punctuality should be copied to the child's file. Records of all meetings will be recorded on CPOMS.
8. 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.
9. For more complex and ongoing concerns with regards to a child's punctuality, the Pupil Wellbeing and Safeguarding Officer will be notified and asked to monitor concerns. The Pupil Wellbeing and Safeguarding Officer will then forward information of findings to the class teachers, Welfare Officer and Headteacher as well as record any notes or meetings on CPOMS.
10. 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.

### **Absence:**

1. Parents should inform the school office of the reason for their child's absence by the start of the school day on the first day of absence. Notification can be made by phone or email.
2. A child's attendance should be monitored carefully and if it falls below 95% or if the Welfare Officer notices a pattern of non-attendance; e.g. regular absence on a Monday. The school will write to parents and inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% and is a cause for concern. Parents will also be informed in this letter that their child's attendance is being closely monitored and further action will be taken if attendance continues to fall.
3. The Welfare Officer will inform the Headteacher of any concerns regarding absence.
4. If the pupil's attendance does not improve then a meeting will be set up between the Welfare Officer and the pupil's parents. At this meeting the importance of good attendance should be stressed and the reasons for the absences discussed to see if any support can be offered. At this meeting parents will be asked to bring any evidence (e.g. medical letters) to explain the reasons for their child's poor attendance. Parents will also be informed at this meeting that any further absences will require evidence (e.g. Doctor's note, proof of prescription, letter of appointment/meeting) to support the reason for their child's absence. Without it the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. After the meeting the child's attendance will be monitored closely by the Welfare Officer. If the child's attendance does not improve then the matter may be referred to the School Attendance Officer at Slough Borough Council who will contact the parents regarding this matter.
5. In serious cases of poor attendance (below 85%) the school may request the involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer. This may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued to parents. In more serious cases the Attendance Officer can consider sending parents to court.
6. 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.

### **Strategies to encourage good attendance:**

1. The Welfare Officer ensures that all class teachers have a copy of their pupil's attendance record for parents evening. The Welfare Officer must highlight any concerns (e.g. less than 95% attendance) as well as successes (e.g. 100% attendance). The class teacher must use these comments and any additional information during their discussion about attendance with the parents.
2. The Welfare Officer must ensure that a copy of pupils' attendance records is given to parents alongside the pupils' annual school report. The Welfare Officer must highlight concerns and successes to the Headteacher who will comment on these on the school report.
3. Breakfast club is also offered by the school as another opportunity to encourage pupils not to be late to school. This service is run by school staff and is available to all pupils. There is a fee for this service, however the school subsidises the breakfast club to ensure that it is financially viable for parents.
4. Certificates will be awarded to classes with the highest attendance at the end of each term.
5. The class with the overall highest attendance throughout the school year will receive a whole class reward.

### **Children collected late:**

1. Parents should collect their child on time.
2. If a parent is late **due to an emergency** then the child should 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.

3. 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 police.

4. 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.

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

6. 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 Wellbeing and Safeguarding Officer but if it continues then the Headteacher will become involved.

#### **Collecting children early from school:**

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

1. 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.

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

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

#### **Exceptional Circumstances:**

1. Only truly exceptional circumstances are sanctioned 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 is authorised or unauthorised.

2. All requests for exceptional leave must be done by completing a 'Leave of absence' request prior to the date of leave. These are all seen by the Headteacher.

3. The school responds sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or major life events.

#### **4. Requests for family holidays will not be granted as exceptional leave.**

5. We treat each case individually, however compassionate leave is typically given for a maximum of 2 days.

#### **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 week of the festival is known. A letter must be sent to the Headteacher requesting this absence.

**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:

1. School directed (e.g. educational visits). School directed activities constitute authorised absences.
2. 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.

**Excluded Pupils:**

1. When a pupil has been temporarily excluded then the absence is regarded as authorised.
2. When a pupil has been permanently excluded, his or her absence should be treated as authorised whilst any review or appeal is in progress. At the end of the review or appeal process, if the exclusion is confirmed then the pupil must be taken off roll.

**School governor for attendance:**

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

Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Welfare officer and a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss support that may be required.

**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.