



*"We are a Catholic community, living and learning in faith.
Through the Gospel values of faith, hope, trust and love,
we aim to recognise individuality and enable each other to fulfil our potential"*



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

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| Responsible for Policy | Head of School |
| Reviewed | Autumn 2023 |
| Review date | Autumn 2024 |
| Status | Statutory |

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding, child protection, and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all members of the School and its community to demonstrably share this commitment.



In keeping with our Mission Statement at St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to encouraging and promoting regular School attendance. This policy follows the guidelines from the Local Authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).

The School staff, alongside the LA, firmly believe that all children benefit from regular School attendance. We will encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Aims of the policy

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support our children with the help of their parents/carers in the establishment to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- enable children to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the School
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- and ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Expectations and Responsibilities:

We expect that all children will:

- attend School 100% of the time
- attend School punctually
- attend School appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers/persons that have day to day responsibility for our children will:

- encourage regular School attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at School punctually, prepared for the School day
- ensure that they contact the School by 9.00am at the latest each day whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend School (with a clear reason for the absence). A note or email should also be sent on their return to School to explain their absence
- contact the School promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from School
- when reporting a child's absence, we expect that all absences will be properly explained and when asked, backed up with evidence
- be honest in the explanation of their child's absence.
- Please do not request leave of absence from School during term time unless in **exceptional circumstances**

We expect that School staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, at least twice daily
- together with the Head of School promote the attendance policy within the School and ensure that it is implemented effectively.
- monitor each child's attendance through liaison with our School's Office Assistant responsible for attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a child fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- encourage good attendance and punctuality and celebrate good attendance in Celebration Collective Worship
- provide a welcoming atmosphere, a safe learning environment for children and a sympathetic response to any child's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of children who are not attending regularly, express concern and clarify the School's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular School attendance
- work with families to resolve attendance issues
- provide pastoral support to address attendance issues
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Officer
- meet with the Inclusion Officer on a regular basis to identify and action any attendance support
- identify and monitor attendance of 'persistent absence' (PA) children

The Office Assistant responsible for attendance will:

- ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date.
- contact parents and request reasons for absence
- collate daily attendance records and, together with the Head of School, put in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality

The Governing Body will:

- monitor and review the attendance policy on an annual basis
- agree appropriate absence targets on an annual basis
- play an active role in ensuring targets are met by monitoring attendance data on a termly basis

Commitment to Attendance

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Parent Responsibility and The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory School age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at School or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory School age and are registered at School is contained within this Act. Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend School.

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the School must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from School at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of School]. Only the Head of School or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any child who is on roll but not present in the School must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parents/carers keeping children off School unnecessarily
- Absences which are not properly or fully explained
- Where the school believes or hears that the reported absence is incorrect
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Oversleeping due to a late night
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- Taking time off at the end or beginning of each term or half term
- Appointments for other family members
- Annual holiday

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those children who are away from School for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996 and, unless it is illness, has been requested in writing, in advance.

- Genuine illness of the child
- Hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the child
- Major religious observances
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams
- Compassionate leave, as considered appropriate to the circumstance

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the School.

Note: Children recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Most types of dual registration

Coming into School

For School children, the classroom is accessible from 8.40am, with a teacher present from 8.40am. Registration takes place in class between 8.40am and 8.50am. Children arriving after 8.50am will need to enter via the office with their parent/carer who will need to sign the late register.

Leaving School

You are welcome to wait for your child at the appropriate gates from 3.10pm

At 3.20pm all children will be shown out by their class teacher.

If you are delayed at home time, please telephone the School to let us know. Likewise, if you have arranged for somebody else to pick them up, please ring or email the office to let us know. Children are not allowed to leave the School premises by themselves.

Encouraging regular attendance

Children will receive School awards for 100% attendance each half term. Awards will not be given to children who are marked late on the class register. At the end of each term, in our Celebration Collective Worship, the class with the best attendance will receive a certificate, and the class with the highest percentage attendance for the half term will receive a mufti day. The class with the most improved attendance over the half term will receive an additional playtime.

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- sharing and reviewing attendance statistics with the Governing Body
- celebrating good attendance through termly attendance awards
- monitoring children, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Officer if the irregular attendance continues

How you can help

You can help the child you care for by

- ensuring that they have everything they need ready for School the night before
- ensuring regular bedtimes and wake up times on School days
- ensuring they arrive at School punctually
- talking to a member of the Office staff if there is a problem

It is your responsibility as parent/carer to ensure that the child in your care attends School regularly, and that they get up in the morning in time to arrive punctually.

Registration & Lateness

Punctuality to School is crucial.

Lateness into School causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at School on time. By law, Schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child.

Morning registration will take place between 8.40 and 8.50am. The registers will remain open until 9.15am. Any child who arrives after 8.50am but before 9.15am will be marked as present but late. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation.

The afternoon registration will be taken at 1.00pm.

Persistent lateness may be referred to the Inclusion Officer. Children's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Children Leaving During the School Day

During School hours the School staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the children are during the School day. Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the School. Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of School time.

Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email to info@stcuthberts.surrey.sch.uk the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time and provide appointment cards/travel documents when asked. Children must be signed out on leaving the School and be signed back in on their return. Where a child is being collected from the School, parents are to report to the School office before the child is allowed to leave the site.

If a child leaves the School site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the School be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person.

Reporting Absences

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the School before 9.00am on the day of absence. If the child you care for needs to be absent from School for another reason, e.g: a medical appointment, the School should be informed in writing in advance. Please try however to make such appointments outside of School hours.

However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

First and Second Day Absence

If the School has not been notified, the parent will be telephoned to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised as determined by the School. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

Third Day Absence

The School will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received further contact may be made by the School by other means (e.g. letter/ personal call/truancy patrol).

Ten Days Absence

Any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to Education Welfare. This is a legal requirement. The School will include details of the action that they have taken.

Where a child is absent from School the following procedure will be followed for welcoming them back. If they have been off for up to 5 days, the Class Teacher will welcome them back and check that they are OK. For longer term absences a more formal reintegration will take place involving the Class Teacher and Head of School, with a plan to catch up if possible work that has been missed.

Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off School because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend School. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Our Inclusion Officer meets with the School on a half termly basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

- a) A phone call to the parent by the Head of School / Deputy Head and issues discussed with child within School.
- b) A letter sent to parents stating concerns about attendance, inviting them into School to meet to discuss the issues.
- c) A meeting at School with the Head of School and Class Teacher.

If this does not resolve the attendance issues, the School will refer to the Inclusion Officer.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90% across the School year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and parents' fullest support and co-operation is needed to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where a plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular School attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the School or Inclusion Officer. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take a holiday during term time.

It is widely known that the link between a child's attendance and attainment is irrefutable. Graduates earn an average of £15.01 per hour; young people who leave School with no qualifications earn an average of £7.44 per hour.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in extremely exceptional circumstances (e.g. immediate family bereavement). Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the Head of School who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. The relevant [form](#) can be found on the School Website (section Parents, Forms).

If absence is taken without prior authorisation by the School, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

Penalty Notices for Holidays:

- In line with the guidance from the DfE a Penalty Notice may be issued for any absence during SATS week.
- The Head of School can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of School for 5 (10 sessions) or more day's leave of absence **without** School authorisation.
- Where a child is taken out of School for leave of absence during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Head of School, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular School attendance.

Children below statutory school age

Once parents have enrolled their child for full time education at St. Cuthbert's, the School will encourage a 100% attendance. With this in mind, the same processes are applied if and when parents put in a request for leave of absence, and it is at the Head of School's discretion whether to authorise an absence or not. Therefore, a child who is below statutory school age can be marked in the register as an 'unauthorised absence', however, the School will not request for the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

Truancy Patrol

When a child comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, their pattern of School attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter will be sent to the parent / carers.

If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 School days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular School attendance.

The Inclusion Officer monitors the attendance of all children on a half termly basis. She will work with School staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by School then the School will make a referral to The Inclusion Officer. The Inclusion Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed or unauthorised absence persists, the Inclusion Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular School attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance

A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly - Section 444(1) Education Act 1996. In such a situation if the parent knows that their child is not attending they may be prosecuted for a more serious offence – Section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996.

If prosecuted, you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carers or a custodial sentence.

Deletion from Admission Register

According to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, if a child has been continuously absent from School for a period of not less than twenty school days, the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register if:

- at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the Head of School in accordance with regulation 6(2);
- the Head of School does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- both the Head of School and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different School that they inform School staff as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from the School roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the child will be leaving this School and starting the next School
- The address of the new School
- The new home address, if it is known.

The child's School records will then be sent on to the new School as soon as possible. In the event that the School has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Officer and Tracking Officer.

In order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance a high priority and convey this to the children at all times. Parents/carers are encouraged to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by subject teachers during period 1 (am registration) and period 5 (pm registration).

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Non- compulsory school-age absence or COVID relate (however, not Isolation following positive test) | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | Not counted in possible attendances |