

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy for Pupils

Introduction

If children are to get the greatest benefit from their education at St Paul's, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As children grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where children are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

Aim

Working in partnership with parents, all staff at St Paul's will do all they can to ensure that children come to school happily, willingly and punctually to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

Objectives

- To ensure that all children attend school well and are punctual everyday.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To ensure that a school attendance target of 96.5% is achieved.
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To work effectively with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other external agencies to follow up attendance issues efficiently.
- To monitor closely children with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

Authorised & Unauthorised Absences

Every half day absence from school is classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised** absence.

- An absence is classified as **authorised** when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason, such as illness, and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. When attendance is causing concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence before any absence is authorised.
- An absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Strategies

- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session (morning and afternoon) and will draw to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher attention any absences that are cause for concern.
- Children arriving late will be carefully monitored and action taken as appropriate. The school day starts at 8.55am and ends at 3.15pm.
- Parents will be asked to telephone (using the dedicated absence line) or notify the school office if their child is absent or ill.
- The school office will make telephone contact with a home when a child is absent if the parents have not notified the school that their child is absent.
- Where a child is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted to discuss the pattern of absences.
- Letters will be sent to parents of children with low attendance on a termly basis.
- Home visits may be carried out when there is concern for a pupil.
- The school will use welfare and attendance officers to follow up absences that are causing concern.

- Where necessary the school will work closely with Tameside to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school. This may result in a prosecution.

Promoting good attendance

Parents, children and staff all have a part to play in promoting good attendance and punctuality. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 it is a Parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular school attendance. To support this St Paul's will:-

- Give parents, children and staff details on attendance through weekly newsletters.
- Report to Parents annually on attendance and punctuality rates.
- Celebrate good attendance through termly and annual 100% attendance certificates.
- Approach individual parents where there is a cause for concern with regard to punctuality and attendance.
- Work together with Parents to raise attendance throughout school.

Medical Appointments

We ask that wherever possible routine medical appointments, such as dental checks, are made outside of school hours. It is most important that Parents inform the school office, prior to the appointment, if your child is to be absent from school and we also request to see the appointment card/letter to support these absences.

Punctuality

When a pupil persistently arrives late, we will investigate the reason for this and offer support where appropriate to rectify the situation. Where the arrival time is after the close of the registration period (30 minutes after the register was taken) the code U will be recorded. This unauthorised absence can be considered when requesting a Penalty Notice or a Penalty Notice Warning.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their education for whatever reason, across the school year. Absence at this level will have a significant impact on a child's educational prospects. PA pupils and pupils at risk of PA are carefully tracked and support will be put into place aimed at improving attendance, this may include an attendance plan and involvement of the Education Welfare Officer.

Requests for leave of absence

Following a change in the law from 1st September 2013 **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any absences taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract a penalty notice.

Warning and Penalty Notices

Warning and Penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more, within a 12-week period. The 2007 Education (Penalty Notices) regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in a prosecution under section 44 of the Education Act 1996. A separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child even if they do not reside at the same address.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request this information from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.