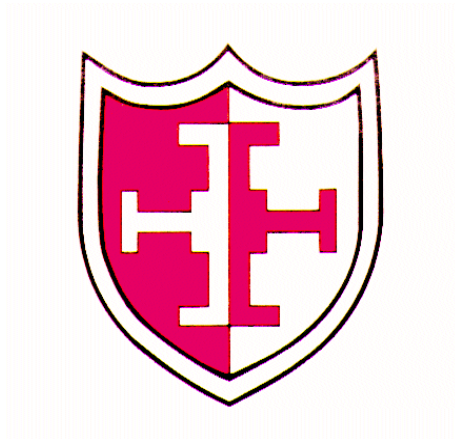


ST. CHAD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



'Christ in our heads, our hearts, our hands'

January 2016

St Chad's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (Part of St John Bosco Catholic Academy)

St John Bosco Catholic Academy consists of successful education establishments and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For the students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is Important

Learning - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and, therefore, may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

The Law relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

- a) *To age, ability and aptitude and*
- b) *To any special education needs he/she may have*

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents,

students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Parental Newsletter
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates/ rewards/awards ceremony

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about any absence is always required, preferably in writing, from the parent/carer.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be away from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. 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 never better 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 can make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Attendance at 95% or below

We monitor all absence thoroughly. When a child has reached the 95% or below mark **for any reasons, including only genuine absences**, the headteacher will write to parents to alert them and offer support. Attendance below 95% is regarded as heading towards persistent absence and the headteacher may ask to see parents in order to draw up an attendance action plan.

Attendance at 93% or below

When a child has reached the 93% or below mark **for any reasons, including only genuine absences**, the headteacher will write to parents to alert them and notify them that until their child's attendance improves to above 93% **no further absences will be authorised unless evidence is provided**. Evidence includes appointment cards, evidence of medicines being prescribed by a doctor or evidence of the circumstances necessitating the absence from school. **If evidence is not provided then any absence will be unauthorised. There are consequences of unauthorised absence detailed below**. Please note this only applies for the period until your child's absence reaches above 93%.

Attendance at 90% or below

When a child's absence falls to 90% or below we will have already been in contact several times and offered every support possible. The headteacher will write to parents to inform them that their child's attendance has been referred to the Education Investigation Service who have legal powers to prosecute, issue penalty notices and make home visits. The EIS is independent of the school and is part of the local authority.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us before 9.30am on the first day of absence, and then subsequent days until they return.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence - you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or a member of the senior management team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority if attendance moves below 95%.

Contact Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your correct contact numbers at all times. Please ensure that we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness at St. Chad's:

St Chad's starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. We open our doors at 8.45am.

Registers are marked at 8.55am.

After 8.55am entrance to the school is via the office where the lateness is recorded. On a daily basis, all parents, whose child arrives late into school, are required to complete the student signing in sheet giving a reason for lateness. Lateness will be considered for authorisation, only when an adult signs the child in. Signing the child in will not, however, automatically mean lateness will be authorised, this will be at the headteacher's discretion.

Lateness is classed as any child coming into school between **8.55 am and 9:25am**.

The register will be closed 30 minutes after the school's start time (**9.25am**). In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Should school be unable to resolve an ongoing lateness issue we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This would mean that your child's lateness would be recorded as unauthorised which could result in the Local Authority considering enforcement proceedings against you. We will always inform you in writing should this action be necessary.

N.B: Registers are taken at the end of day on a Friday and on the last day prior to a holiday.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time affects your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in term time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **NO** automatic entitlement in law to time off during term time to go on holiday and the Government have amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as of September 2013 to reflect this.

In light of the changes to Pupil Registration Regulations, St Chad's Catholic Primary School will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications for absence in term time must be applied for at least ten school days prior to requested leave dates by completing the application form (appendix 1), stating the unavoidable circumstances which make these exceptional circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice Fines or prosecution.

Education Investigation Service

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) at the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, their Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notice Fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EIS themselves to ask for advice or information. **They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice in accordance with their statutory duties Their telephone number is 01384 814317.** Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

School Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for the Academy is 96% and we will keep you updated regularly about how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our students can be amongst the best in the borough.

Through the year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and we ask for your full support.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1.



St. Chad's Catholic Primary School
(part of St. John Bosco Catholic Academy Company)

Child(ren)names
Class/es

Address.....
Post Code.....

I would like to apply for 'Leave of Absence' from school for the above named:
From (date).....to (date).....

The Head teacher may only grant 'Leave of Absence' in special or exceptional circumstances.
Please give the reason leave is required

.....
.....
.....
.....

By signing this form I understand the following:

1. The school's Attendance Policy states that absences during term time will not be authorised unless the Head teacher agrees that there are special or exceptional circumstances and that any absence will be recorded as unauthorised on the school register.
2. Any unauthorised absences MAY be referred to The Education Investigation Service.
3. I understand that if a referral is made to The Education Investigation Service that I may be subject to a Penalty Notice, (a fine of up to £120 in respect of each child and each parent,) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court

Signed.....Name.....

Relationship to child.....

Names of each adult who has Parental Responsibility for each child
.....

Address if different to child's home
address:.....