

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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“Sowing the seeds for the future”

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School is committed to providing excellence for students of all abilities high attendance and good punctuality is essential for students to work to their potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at the school. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing students for future working life as an adult. Students should be at the school, on time and every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise the responsibility and obligation to make sure that students attend regularly. This Policy sets out how the school, its partners and parents/carers can work together to achieve this.

The Importance of Regular Attendance

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 so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring students' regular attendance at the school is the legal responsibility of parent by law, all children of compulsory school age must attend school. Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances, it sometimes puts children at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. Permitting absence from the school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.

To maintain a focus on this the school will:

- Report to parents every six weeks on how their child is performing at the school. This will include information about their attendance and punctuality.
- Celebrate good attendance in house assemblies each week and by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through stamps, certificates, events and trips, both in and outside the school.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a student is absent parents should:

- Contact the school by 9am ideally on the first day of absence; the dedicated telephone number is 0151 525 6358 option 2.
- Send a note in on the first day that the student returns with an explanation of the absence
- **You must do this even if you have already telephone us;**
- Parents/Carers may also call into the school and report to reception staff, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.
- For absences that extend to a week [5 school days] some form of medical evidence is required; this can be in the form of a Doctor's note/copy prescription/sight of prescribed medication/completed school form.

If a student is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence if a message [that explains the absence] has not been received.
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer and /or Headteacher, if absences persist;

Telephone numbers:

- There are times when the school will need to contact parents on a range of issues, including absence, so it is essential that the school has up to date contact numbers at all times. As we use a texting service this is very important. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons. Persistent poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. an attendance or punctuality contract or detention.

How we manage lateness:

- At 8.55am the school day starts and students are expected to be in class at that time.
- From 8.45 students can access the school building
- 9.15am sharp the gates close so the latest time a student should arrive is 9.10am
- At 9.25am the registers are closed

In accordance with the Regulations, if students arrive after 10am 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 parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. Parents/Carers can approach the school at any time if they experience problems getting their child to the school on time.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from the school has to be classified by the school [not by the parents], as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for class. Registers are legal documents so the school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor student punctuality and guard against truancy. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers, preferably in writing.

Authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from the school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidable fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at the school too late to get a mark. [Registers close at 10am each day]
- A child arriving late after that time will be recorded as U [unauthorised]
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Oversleeping
- Absent to look after an unwell sibling
- Inadequate uniform
- Confusion over term dates
- 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 parent and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parent/carers should not condone their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter.

Exceptional leave in term-time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term time to have exceptional leave. 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 sanction such as Penalty Notice.

Holiday during term-time

In line with legislation [September 2013] **no** holidays will be authorised in term-time, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Leave

Students have a total of 13 weeks holiday a year so parents should only request that they be able to take their child out of school under **exceptional circumstances**. This is known as exceptional leave and must be applied for in writing addressed to the Head teacher. In this letter parents/carers should make clear the reasons why it is necessary to take their child(ren) out of

school. Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education and is not acceptable. All application letters for exceptional leave must be made two weeks in advance.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher that a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the Head teacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the School year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. The school expects parents' fullest support and co-operation 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.

Parents/carers will be informed of the concern immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. This is combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Penalty Notice Proceedings

Penalty Notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Welfare Service based on requested from schools.

The following circumstances are considered appropriate as reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy, including attendance and exclusion sweeps [formerly truancy sweeps.]
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Excessive holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least a minimum evidential requirement of twelve [12] school sessions lost to unauthorised absence in the current term and/or twenty [20] sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

Payment of a penalty within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £60. Payment after this time, but within 42 days of receipt of the notice is £120. **[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012].**

Following the request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Welfare Service to ensure that the request meets the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The Role of

Parents are expected to contact the School at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. He/she 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 the case will be referred to the local authority who will invite the parent to a school attendance panel. It is here they will receive a formal warning in relation to their child's attendance at school.

Children Missing in Education

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher or deputy Headteacher (Student Welfare) and the Attendance & Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family move away from the area but do not register with another school, the School will alert the local authority who will then take action according to child missing in education policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

Publication of Attendance Figures

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 school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.