



St Edmund's Catholic School
A learning community
A faith community
A vibrant forward looking community

**ATTENDANCE &
PUNCTUALITY**
-
**an Agreement for
Parents**

Ratified by FGB 20th January 2015
Next Review: January 2017

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction:

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually and this policy sets out how we together will achieve this.

In order for any attendance and punctuality policy to be effective it must be consistently applied throughout the whole school, by its staff, pupils, parents and carers.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupils' absence disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring each child's regular attendance at school is a legal parental responsibility, permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or Court action/ prosecution.

Research has shown that regular attendance and good punctuality are key factors in students achieving their full potential at school. For every drop in 10% attendance there is an average drop of one grade at GCSE.

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EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Although being absent cannot always be helped as we all do become ill from time to time, please take a look at the table below to show exactly what an absent child could be missing.

365 DAYS IN A YEAR	190 SCHOOL DAYS IN TOTAL	ABSENCE
100% attendance	190 days	0
95% attendance	180 days	2 weeks
90% attendance	171 days	4 weeks
85% attendance	161 days	6 weeks
80% attendance	152 days	More than half a term
75% attendance	143 days	9 + weeks

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide details on attendance in our newsletter and website;
- Provide a report to parents at least half-termly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events;
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Safeguarding: - Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interest of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child encompasses: - Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

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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
 - (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

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

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no agreement has been given. 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

This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. 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 a 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 usually make things worse.

Leave of Absence in term time:

Taking leave of absence in term time will affect the schooling of children 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 made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education. Because of the damage to learning caused by this, **we are unable to authorise any holidays in term time.** There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. If parents decide to take their children on holiday during term time the School will apply for a Penalty Notice.

The School may agree leave in exceptional circumstances. This must be applied for in writing and will be sanctioned by the Head Teacher.

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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 is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence 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 by letter.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral/ attendance system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA students and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and it may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Service and School Liaison Officers.

Absence procedure:

If a child is absent parents must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence; then every day the child is absent.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents must do this even if they have already telephoned school;
- Or parents can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.

School Reporting Absence Procedure

- First day calling.
- Letters to parents.
- Home visits.
- Sign post pastoral support / learning mentors and external agencies where needed.
- Pre referral meetings.
- Referral to Attendance Advisory Service if a child's attendance is 85% and below.

The School Liaison Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school may refer to the Attendance Service. The Educational Welfare Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persist the Attendance Advisory Service can use sanction such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

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Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child 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, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The School day starts at **8:45 am** and we expect children to be in class at that time.

At **8:50 am** every day we operate a 'Late Through the Gate' system and any student who is late is automatically detained after school that day.

Registers are marked by **8:45 am** and children will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:00 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a 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 parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or Court action if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with the Key Stage Leader /or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their son/daughter to school on time.

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

As well as being absent a lot from school effecting a child's development, being late also has a big effect. Please look at the table below.

Lateness = Lost Learning (figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 mins late each day	3 days lost
10 mins late each day	6.5 days lost
15 mins late each day	10 days lost
20 mins late each day	13 days lost
30 mins late each day	19 days lost

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

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

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and parents should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance and punctuality for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep parents updated regularly about progress to this level and how their child's attendance and punctuality compares.

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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 authority.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home –School Bulletin and we ask for the full support of parents

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are: Mrs C Watson

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils 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.

Date of Policy/ Review: January 2016

Tear off Slip

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy at St Edmund’s Catholic School

Name of Child:

Signature of parent/ carer:

Date:

Please return this tear off slip to the office.

Thank you.

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