

# **St. Ann's R.C. Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

Last Reviewed: June 2023  
Next Review by: September 2024

## Our School's Mission Statement

**'We, the family of St Ann's, rejoice in our learning; striving for excellence. We challenge ourselves, follow Jesus and empower each other to be the best we can be.**

**Motivate, learn, inspire.'**

### **1.0 Introduction**

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and well enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

### **2.0 Aims and objectives**

- To promote good attendance
- To ensure every child is safeguarded and their right to education protected
- To ensure every child reaches their full potential through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- To ensure governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate, up to date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes or group of people and act early to address them
- To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

### **3.0 Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

➤ [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

➤ [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

#### **4. 0 Roles and Responsibilities**

Attendance is everybody's business. It is important that our school and our families work together to ensure that each child receives their full entitlement to an education. By working in partnership with one another, our children will have the best chances at reaching their full potential.

##### **4. 1 The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 At St. Ann's RC Primary School, the Attendance management team is made up of the headteacher (M. Noctor), Designated Senior Leader for Attendance (S Whittaker), SENDCo, (A. Gibbons) Pastoral/family support assistant (J. Grogan), school secretary (T. Bradbury)

##### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Instructing the Local Authority to fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Forming positive relationships with families.

##### **The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance**

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data analysis
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Attending half-termly Safeguarding meetings to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns

- Attending meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Carrying out home visits where necessary
- Forming positive relationships with families.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is: S. Whittaker

#### Pastoral / Family Support worker & School Secretary

This is made up of the school secretary and the school pastoral/family support worker. Together they are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the local authority Pupil Absence Team
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advising the Deputy/Head when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Coordinating home visits and where relevant, attend a home visit.
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance
- Monitoring attendance registers
- Forming positive relationships with families.

The school Secretary is: Tracy Bradbury

The Pastoral / Family support worker is: Josephine Grogan

#### Key Phase Leaders

Key Phase Leaders are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of attendance and punctuality across their key phase
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Forming positive relationships with families.

#### Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of attendance and punctuality within their class
- Monitoring attendance of pupils within their class and inform the Attendance Management Team if they feel that a child's attendance is becoming a concern
- Recording attendance on a daily basis at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office using the SIMs system.
- Forming positive relationships with families.

#### Office Staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

### Parents and Carers:

It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance. We request that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- Follow the school's procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of morning routine, homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of the routine.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, following the correct procedure and giving as much notice as possible.

### Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **5.0 Recording attendance**

### 5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will also record:
  - Whether the absence is authorised or not
  - The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
  - The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register in line with DfE guidance.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

## 5.2 Understanding types of absence

### Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. Parents should advise the school by telephone, email or in person to the **school office** before 9am or as soon as practically possible, on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. If parents do not contact the school to report a child's absence the following procedure will be initiated:

- Phone call to the emergency contacts will be made in priority order, as listed on the child's admission register
- If contact cannot be made, a message will be left requesting a call to school
- If contact is NOT obtained, where necessary the Designated Safeguarding Lead may be informed and safeguarding procedures followed
- If a child is absent for a second consecutive day and contact has not been obtained, a home visit may be carried out by a member of the senior leadership team.
- If the child cannot be seen and where school staff have concerns about a child, professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil may lead to welfare concerns being escalated with further agencies.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

- **Illness**  
In most cases a telephone call from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. In the unusual event that the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- **Medical and dental appointments**  
Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should provide evidence such as an appointment card to school.
- **Exclusion from school**  
In very rare cases, the school may take the decision to exclude a child for a set period of time. This will be explained during a conversation with the parent/carer and clarified in writing. During this time, the child must remain at home with the parent / carer and complete any necessary school work.
- **Days of religious observance**  
St. Ann's RC Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be

absent. Parents are required to complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence from school' Form (See Appendix A)

- **Educational visit**
- **Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes** – Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- **Approved sporting activity**
- **Family bereavements**
- **Special Occasions**  
Parents are required to complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence from school' Form (See Appendix A)
- **Family holidays and Extended Leave**  
Holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.  
Parents are required to complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence from school' Form (See Appendix A)

St. Ann's RC Primary School will consider each request individually and will take the following into account:

1. The nature of the event.
2. The frequency (one off event or a regular occurrence).
3. Has advance notification been given.
4. The overall attendance pattern of the child.

To apply for a child to be granted leave from school parents must **complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence from school' Form (see Appendix A)** and return it school for consideration well in advance of the proposed leave and before committing to any expense. Upon receipt of a request the Headteacher will make a decision as to whether to authorise the absence, being mindful of government regulations and LA guidance.

Where school has concerns about the leave request a meeting will be arranged with the parent/guardian to discuss the application. Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by the school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request, even if we believe that the circumstances are exceptional, we will also look at various factors before reaching a decision such as:

- The timing of the request for example, when a pupil is just starting school or has just moved into a new class, absences must be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible
- Pupils should not be absent both immediately before and during assessment periods eg. SAT's
- When a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern, or taking the leave will lead it to become a cause for concern

- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year
- 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 from the Local Authority.
- In certain circumstances, such as prolonged absence for any reason other than medical, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed

It is a legal requirement for any parent/guardian to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take **any** leave in term time.

Parents **do not** have an automatic right to take their child out of school for leave during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if they do so without prior arrangement with the Headteacher. If you fail to pay a penalty fine within 28 days, you may be prosecuted which could result in a further fine.

**The legislation only allows the Headteacher to authorise such leave in exceptional circumstances.**

#### Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school and for which no 'leave' has been given. This can lead to the Trafford Local Authority using sanction and/or legal proceedings. Where the school has concerns with a child's attendance, the school **Attendance Procedures** will be followed (*See Appendix B*)

#### 5.3 Legal Sanctions

##### Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least eight sessions (4 days) of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In some cases, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice. The notice is usually a £60 fine per child, per parent for the period of absence, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after the 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received within 20 school days, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil



Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place. Where there is a concern for welfare a referral may be made to children's social services.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

## 6.0 Punctuality

St. Ann's RC Primary School requests that all parents ensure that their child(ren) arrives at school promptly. The school gates and classroom doors open at 8.45am and the children are expected to be in the classroom at 9am when registration begins. Pupils arriving after the register is closed (9.10am) will be marked as late. (Please note: the school cannot take responsibility for children arriving at school before 8.45am unless they are attending the Breakfast Club.)

### Late (after 9.10am)

If a child arrives late at school, the parent/carer must always report to the Infant Office to sign their child in. A late mark will be coded in the register. A record will be kept and persistent lateness will result in the school **Late Procedures** being followed (*See Appendix C*)

Why is punctuality so important?

- Children that arrive late are likely to have missed the start of the lesson which makes it more difficult for them to learn as the lesson progresses as they can miss the input/instruction for the lesson.
- Late arrivals distract other pupils and interrupt the teacher's lesson.
- Children that arrive late are likely to feel unsettled and can be embarrassed to walk into class once it has started.
- Children that arrive late are developing bad habits. It sets up your child for their future; whether at primary school, secondary school, college or work. They could lose their place or job if they think it is acceptable to be late.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5mins	3.4 days
10mins	6.9 days
15mins	10.3 days
20mins	13.8 days
30mins	20.7 days

## 7.0 Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Liaise with the Link Governor for Attendance each term to discuss progress against targets for attendance.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns and monitor the impact.

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school sets out its procedure for address poor attendance as noted in *Appendix B Attendance Procedure*.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance