

# St Augustine's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

**“We live, love and learn together in the light of the life of Christ”**

## ***“Attendance and punctuality matter...”***

### **1) Policy Aim**

#### **As a school we aim to:**

Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 96%.

Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular and timely attendance.

#### **Good attendance is important because:**

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.

Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically.

Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with.

Regular attendees find learning more satisfying.

Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school.

#### **As a Parent you can help us by:**

##### **Definition of parent**

Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a "parent" in relation to a **child** or **young person** is defined as:

- The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not.
- Anyone who although not a natural parent has parental responsibility for a child.
- Any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

Understanding the daily registration procedure, the importance of punctuality and the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Ringling on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return.

Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours.

Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

Raising concerns over a child's unhappiness about coming to school as soon as possible if this is a reason for non-attendance.

Promoting the importance of attendance to children in discussion and through ensuring they come to school unless they are really unwell.

**We shall:**

Encourage all stakeholders - staff, pupils, parents and governors to set an example for good attendance and punctuality.

Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as soon as possible.

Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, in the Home-School agreement and at new parent induction evenings.

Publish your child's attendance rate on their annual school report.

Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality.

Review attendance for individuals half termly in order to identify concerns.

Persistent non-attendance of less than 85% may be reported to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service.

Parents whose child's attendance falls below 90% will be contacted and reasons sought and support put in place where appropriate.

Seek support from the Local Authority in arranging tuition for children whose absence is long term and where they will miss long blocks of schooling.

Do our best to provide a stimulating and happy environment where children enjoy coming to school.

Work with you where attendance issues seem to be as a result of a child's reluctance to come to school.

## **2) Policy Monitoring**

### **Monitoring of Punctuality and Attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and punctuality through:

Maintaining a school register for attendance and punctuality at the start of the morning and afternoon session.

Coding reasons for absence in order to identify trends for non-attendance.

The head teacher seeking reports on attendance matters at regular intervals.

Maintaining a record of unauthorised leave of absence and informing governors.

Monitoring children who are persistently absent (missing 10% or more of school).

Monitoring children within the bottom 10% of our school.

Monitoring attendance of specific groups - Pupil Premium Children and SEN children where a trend emerges.

Staff are asked to report any concerns over a child's attendance if they identify any patterns emerging.

Where long term illness affects absence, we may seek evidence via a doctor's note in order to meet Safeguarding requirements.

The school sets a target, as required by the government, for attendance and governors review proximity to the target, identifying if there is a trend of poor attendance compared to similar schools nationally. This enables us to identify whether there is an issue with attendance and would provoke further investigation into why.

Reports on attendance will be shared with the Governing Body termly.

## **Guidance for Parents**

### **Procedures for Registration**

Registers open in the morning at 8:40am and close ten minutes later. Children are marked present or absent. Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as an unauthorised absence in line with the DFE guidance.

In the afternoon, registers open at 1:15pm in KS1 and 1.30pm in KS2. Registers close five minutes later.

Staff are required to use the correct codes when recording absence. These are set out in each register.

If pupils arrive after the close of registration, they are given a late mark.

## **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, religious observance and where LA transport should be provided but is unavailable.

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically. Absences are authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Holidays

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is not approved then this shall be recorded as an Unauthorised Absence.

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

## **Punctuality**

It is important to be on time as lessons begin promptly.

Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. It is the Parent’s responsibility to ensure their child is on time.

Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as an Unauthorised Absence in line with the DFE guidance.

We will let you know if we have concerns about your child’s punctuality.

## Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of leave of absence. There is **no** entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in exceptional circumstances.

Absence taken and not authorised will be considered as a breach of section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be allowed. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application.)

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking. Please ask the school office for a form; the head teacher will consider your request and advise you of their decision (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss it further).

Each application will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Where applications for leave of absence are refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence which may result in legal action being taken against the parents.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

(A copy of which can be found at  
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

The more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is at school.