



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is our school St Werburgh's and St Columba's

A place to be inspired, be accepted, be yourself and be unique.

Be able to grow spiritually, academically and morally.

Be able to contribute to the community and be a responsible global citizen.

Be able to reach for the stars and fulfil your potential.

A place providing an excellent Catholic education for everyone.

Where we belong, where everyone belongs.

Action: Interim review Sumer 2021

Full Review: Autumn Term 2024

Introduction

This policy was developed through a process of consultation with Education Welfare Service, Staff and Governors

Roles	Responsibilities
Head teacher	To monitor the attendance throughout the school
Office	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children or young people
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead /Head teacher	To raise the level of attendance of those children or young people identified as being at risk/persistent absentees
Class teacher/Head teacher/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	To ensure the welfare of children or young people in school
Governors	To monitor attendance and evaluate effectiveness of policy
EWO	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following the Local Authority's policies and procedures

Attendance Policy Statement:

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Aims:

- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

Objectives:

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parents/carers about regular school attendance
- For all school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and/or learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- To ensure effective working relationship with Education Welfare Service, and the reporting of half-termly figures to the service

Targets:

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer and the School Improvement Partner
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets where appropriate, for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these where appropriate
- To target resources in order to improve attendance and implement strategies where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parents/carers, pupils and governors and the Local Authority informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children or Young People.

Consultation Process:

School Staff/Governors

The staff named above will review this policy and make any changes, which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy.

Parents/carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters

- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- In the school prospectus
- On the website

Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

Procedure for Parents

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s) or carers will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on every day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day.
- If a child is absent for three days or more, parents should contact the school to provide an update on their condition.
- If contact explaining the child or young person's absence fails to be made by parents/carers, then the school will normally attempt to contact the home on the first day of absence.
- The head teacher will regularly remind parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Policy and Procedure

- Parents need to inform school on the first day of absence by 9.20am on a dedicated telephone line. The reason for absence is recorded in a file. The reason for absence needs to be given. If we do not have a reason for absence, we will contact the parent if appropriate. This is in line with Safeguarding Policies.
- Doors open at 8.40am for Rec/KS1/KS2.
- The doors to the F/KS1 Department will be closed at 8.50am.
- The doors to the KS2 Department will be closed at 8.50am.
- If children are late after doors are closed, they need to enter through the main doors and register their attendance with the admin staff
- After 8.50 the 'L' code will be used to record late attendance.
- If absence or late arrival is causing concern, or if attendance falls below 90%, and the school does not have a clear reason, then action will be taken. Below 90% attendance is categorised as poor attendance by the LA. When this is the case the school considers each child's case individually.
- If absence falls below 95% this is also a cause for concern and the appropriate action will be taken.
- The action may be to send 'Letter 1' to the parent with the child's attendance certificate.
- If there has been no improvement a meeting will be arranged using 'Attendance Panel Meeting'. At this meeting an action plan will be completed with the parent. It might be helpful to have medical documentation to enable the school and family to work together.
- If attendance does not improve 'Letter 3.'
- If a child needs to be withdrawn for a medical appointment or for any other reason in the school day. We need to sign the child out at the main office.
- Parents will receive an attendance report if there are any concerns and as a matter of policy on a termly basis Christmas, Easter and with your child's annual school report.

Requirement to provide medical evidence

If your child's attendance falls below 97% for any reason you may be required to provide school with some form of medical evidence. Failure to provide such evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised and can leave a parent vulnerable to legal action being considered. (This could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty)

[Fixed Penalties (FPN) are issued by the local authority for absences of 10 school sessions (5 days) or more for holidays or for 10 school sessions in a school term known as Irregular Attendance]

Definition of medical evidence

Medical evidence may take the form of:

A doctors certificate (optional)

Medication containing child's name and date of issue

Counterfoil from repeat prescription

Hospital appointment letters

This list is not exhaustive and other evidence may be offered and the school may make a judgement on whether to accept it or not.

Completing the Register

- Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- The register should be marked using the codes advised by DfE and Cheshire West and Chester Council
- For schools with computerised registers the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Electronic registers have to be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents.**

Lateness

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

School begins at 9.00am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Thirty minutes after the close of registration a late mark becomes an unauthorised absence.

The register will officially close at 9.30am; after this time a child will be coded "U" which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

Family Holidays during term time

Parent(s)/carer(s) are not allowed to book a family holiday during term time. **Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday. Any applications for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.**

A child or young person who is absent longer than 5 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and the parent may be liable to prosecution.

A child or young person who is absent longer than 20 days after the agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and will no longer have a place at this school.

If parents choose to take their holidays during term time the Local Authority will be informed as this will constitute an unauthorised absence. A Fixed Penalty Notice may then be issued in

accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The rates payable by parents are £60 per parent per pupil where the amount is paid within 21 days and £120 where the amount is paid within 28 days. The charge is per parent/ carer per child. If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid this could lead to prosecution in the Magistrate's Court.

What can parents/carers) do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child or young person is absent and keep in touch with us during the absence
- Reinforce to your child the importance of attending school
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Be punctual

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the head teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service

You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.

The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Parents/carers need to be aware that Cheshire West and Chester Schools are operating the Fast Track Prosecution System in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.

In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire West and Chester is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in the School Development Plan. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across the county. Schools are aware and take into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

Disability Equality

Care has been taken to ensure that this policy does not cause people with disabilities to be treated less favourably than others. Any person who considers that this policy does cause such discrimination should contact the Headteacher at the school.

Rewards for Good Attendance

Whilst school would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children, who through illness and other circumstances, who have been unavoidably absent from school, we do recognise good attendance by:

- Certificates for excellent attendance (100%)
- Whole class rewards for good attendance including the presentation of a trophy.

Addendum COVID 19

1. Aims and scope

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2. Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.

In section 4.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)

Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual

Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's guidance on full reopening for schools (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

3. Attendance expectations

It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless:

They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with our normal attendance policy

They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below)

4. Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission

Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results.

If the pupil's test result is negative: the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness).

If the person the pupil lives with tests negative: the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school

4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible.

[Add details of your contact procedures].

Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of

sense of smell or taste).

If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

4.3. Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad

The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's exemptions list.

The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

Add any rules your school has on pupils travelling to non-exempt countries.

4.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown

The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan to admin@lovelearnlaugh.org.uk or a photocopy to the school address.

The pupil will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school.

Add any additional measures that you will take to ease any concerns about their return to school.

See section 6 for suggestions.

4.5 Remote learning provision

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in our remote learning contingency plan.

We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register

5. Recording attendance

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 circumstance' as of our normal attendance policy)

- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant

absence codes and when we will use them)

Pupils must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The

register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

6. Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by telephoning or text to enquire about absence.

- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will assess on a case by case basis.

- Arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carer and a member of the SLT to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe

6.1 Legal sanctions

Explain any changes to your rules in your normal attendance policy on imposing legal sanctions on parents/carers. Or, if there are no changes, you may want to state that your normal rules on legal sanctions apply.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum [insert interval, we recommend every 2 months during term time] by [name/job title of individual]. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
I	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
I	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown