



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

To love and serve as Jesus shows us

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The aims of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School are:

1. To create for each individual a working partnership between home, parish and school and to foster close relationships with the wider community.
2. To foster happy caring relationships within a school which offers a safe and secure environment and enables individuals to grow in confidence, dignity and self-esteem.
3. To provide a broad and balanced curriculum in a Catholic setting, in which each child grows in knowledge and understanding through the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values and so enabling them to become active contributors to society.
4. To make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences in nurturing the faith development of each individual.

It is with the above aims in mind that this policy has been drawn up and agreed by the Governors of the school.

Rationale

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

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ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

- All children should be ready to come into school at 8.40 a.m. each day although bell is rung at 8.45 a.m. The register is taken twice a day at 8.50am and Infants 12.45 / Juniors 1.00pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.15 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence. If a child arrives in after 9.15 am this will be recorded as a U – Late after the close of registration.
- The afternoon register is taken at 12.45pm for infants / 1.00 pm for juniors.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

DEFINITIONS

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. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

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IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to telephone the school by 9.00a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason. Parents are requested to send in a written note explaining the child's absence when the child returns to school.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

HOLIDAYS

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

In line with Warrington Local Authority, and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil

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- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- ***_If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.***
- ***_If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.***

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.

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Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

All medical absences must now be accompanied by medical evidence. This can be an appointment card or letter from a GP or hospital doctor.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and are reported and monitored to the Local Authority's Attendance Officer (AO).
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored daily by the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The Attendance Officer may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The LA has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
- Unauthorised absences include Lates and 'U' in the register

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REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

All the children who have achieved 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in assembly. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% for a whole year which. A reward will be given each term to the class with the best overall performance (e.g. additional playtime).

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Adviser at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Updated February 2015

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