



St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust



Attendance Policy

Policy Date:			
Policy Review Date:	16 th June 2021	Anthony Gallagher	
Ratified by Governing Body:		James Stanley	

The school recognises that it has a major role in monitoring levels of attendance and punctuality and in creating the appropriate climate in the school to foster regular attendance and excellent timekeeping all of which the school believes promotes a basis for each child to achieve their potential.

We expect all of our children to attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. The link between good progress and good attendance is clear.

Attendance

Our school day runs from 8.40 a.m. until 3.05 p.m. We publish our term dates in our newsletters and on our school website. We ask that children and parents do not arrive on site until 8.30am and they will be supervised on the playground by a member of staff until 8.40am when the whistle will go.

We take our responsibilities seriously and carefully record all absences and lateness.

Parents are asked to notify the school on the first day of any absence, either by personal call, by email, by telephone message or by sending a note with another child. If the school has not been notified of an absence by 9.30 am the school secretary will telephone home to reassure us that a child is safe with a responsible adult.

Regulations state that if the school is not informed by parents of visits to the doctor, dentist, illness, holidays etc. then these absences automatically become unauthorised. It is therefore essential that any reasons for absence (even short absences) be given.

Where possible, visits to the doctor, dentist, optician etc., should be made for before or after school or during school holidays.

The school keeps records of all authorised and unauthorised absences; these are published termly in the Governors' reports but may also be published in the school newsletter.

The Headteacher and all members of staff monitor attendance closely and any irregular attendances or children who are away from school for more than a week through illness or hospital attendance are brought to the attention of the Headteacher.

Following these discussions, all children who are identified as a concern in terms of attendance are noted by the Headteacher. These are usually children with attendance levels less than 90%. The Headteacher, after further consultation with the relevant member of teaching staff or SMT will make contact with the parents/carers of the child/children concerned to request an informal meeting to see how the school can support the parents/carers in improving attendance.

The school is very aware that issues of attendance are sometimes due to factors beyond the control of parents or carers, such as long term illness or hospitalisation and the school is committed to working with parents to limiting the impact of these events on the development of individual children. However, where attendance is due to factors within the control of parents or carers the school will seek to establish an agreed plan of action to improve patterns of attendance.

Should this plan not have the desired impact or if, during discussions with parents or carers, the Headteacher identifies wider issues of concern, then the process will be formalised by the Headteacher wanting to outline the concerns and the required action needed. Where it is deemed appropriate to refer a problem to an Education Welfare Officer (EWO), a referral form is completed giving details of the nature of the problem, any difficulties and action already taken by the school.

At all times, the school and EWO will seek to work together with parents to respond to the issues identified. In certain circumstances, other agencies such as the school Doctor / Nurse may be called on to support the process.

The school is committed to ensuring that parents and carers are fully involved and informed about every stage of these processes. Organisations concerned with issues of attendance will not contact parents/carers before the school has raised the issue of concern itself, unless there are extreme circumstances and it is judged that this

would be in the child's best interest. This approach has been very successful in helping the school and parents to work together to ensure that the welfare and development of all children in our care is supported.

Holidays/Leave of absences

Children should not be taken out of school for leisure activities or for holidays. There are 14 weeks of school holidays and it is expected that parents arrange family holidays during this time. The Headteacher can authorise holidays only in exceptional circumstances. All requests will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences may lead to the school requesting that the local authority serves a Penalty Notice to parents in line with the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Penalty Notice

- £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and
- £120 if paid within 28 days.

Please read the following link for more information -

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance>

As of September 2013 **no** holiday will be authorised unless the Headteacher considers the request to be an exceptional circumstance.

No holiday will be authorised unless the meeting has been requested and taken place. Please be aware the school can only authorise holiday for exceptional circumstances even if your child's attendance otherwise is good.

It is a requirement in "The Educational School Attendance Targets (England) Regulations" that "the Governing Body shall set an (attendance) target and submit it to the local education authority."

The school's current target for pupil attendance is **97%**, which is very high and reflects the importance that the school and parents attach to regular attendance.

Punctuality

Children arriving late enter the school via the Main Reception. The office records lateness in the class register. A late mark is issued for arrival at school after 9.10am – that is 30 minutes after the start of the school morning. A late mark is judged to be an unauthorised absence and is recorded in the register as such.

In the event that a child is regularly late in being collected from school at the end of the school day, the Class teacher or Headteacher will contact parents to request a meeting to discuss the situation. It is a parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that their children are collected promptly from school and is a responsibility which the school will actively promote.

Reporting Absences

If your child is absent from school due to illness, please contact the school office via phone or email on the first day of absence. If the office has not heard from you by 9.30 a.m. a text via 'Parentmail' will be made to the first contact to reassure us that the child is safe. Parents should confirm any subsequent absences in writing, giving details of reasons and date(s).