



St Aloysius Catholic Primary

In Jesus we learn, love and grow together

Attendance Policy

Policy Revised: March 2017

Review Date: Spring 2020

Signed Executive Headteacher.....

Signed Chair of Governors.....

WHY WE HAVE AN ATTENDANCE POLICY

We want to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education to maximise opportunities for everybody to realise their potential. Experience and research both locally and nationally demonstrates a clear link between good attainment and good attendance. The school believes that setting a clear policy for attendance and punctuality is an excellent preparation for later school years and future employment.

The school strives to be welcoming and caring, so that everybody in the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure everybody attends school punctually on every day of each term.

The school intends to build on a system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who do not.

To meet these objectives St Aloysius Catholic Primary School will continue to foster good communication with pupils, parents, carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

THE TARGET

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School intends to maintain its high levels of attendance each year. Our current target for 2017-2018 is 96%.

OUR STATUTORY DUTIES

This policy is written in relation to the following acts of Parliament and guidance relating to attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003.

- LB Camden Attendance Strategy
- We will also take account of new legislation and initiatives.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Exceptional Leave should not be taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances, when authority should be requested from the Head of School. There is no automatic right to a request being agreed. Where unauthorised absence is taken the school will take relevant action and this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service. This could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice/s to parents if a child is taken out of school during term time without written permission from the Head of School. Penalty Notices are used as an alternative to taking legal action through the courts, but court action may also be used. Payment is £60, per parent per child, if paid within 21 days. If the Notice is not paid within 21 days, the amount will increase to £120 between days 21- 28. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid the LA may then take the matter to court.

The law dictates that 'the parent' is any carer who has day to day care of the pupil irrespective of PR

We will adopt a focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

1. Parents and carers are asked to agree to this policy in the signing of the home school agreement. This makes clear to them that unauthorised absences do not only damage their own child's education, but also others. This is because teachers need to help those children who have been absent catch up with work they have missed, which reduces the time available to give to the remaining children in the class. This is one of the crucial reasons for a firm attendance policy, because when parents withdraw their children from school, it is not only their children who are affected.
2. This policy also seeks to encourage punctuality. Children can arrive at school from 8.45 am and should be in class up by 9am. Children arriving after 9am are recorded as being late, and where children repeatedly arrive late the school will work with the family to help overcome barriers to good punctuality. If a pupil arrives at school after 9.15am they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has more than eight unauthorised lates within an eight week period a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice. Payment is £60, to be paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the amount will increase to £120. **The Notice will also apply per parent per child.**
3. Punctual collection of children after school is strongly encouraged. The school day ends at 3:15pm in the Lower School and 3:20pm in the Upper School (unless arrangements have been made for after school clubs). Where parents continually fail to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the school day the school may have to consider making a referral to Family Support and Social Work.

Communicating with parents and carers

1. The school gives high priority to conveying to parents, carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, not least because these are very helpful when there is a problem about attendance.

Measures we take include:

- Holding induction sessions for all new parents and pupils
- Including attendance and punctuality performance in the weekly school newsletter
- Sharing attendance and punctuality data with parents at pupil progress meetings and on Pupil Reports.
- A reward system for the most punctual class each week is in place to encourage a collective approach to the importance of arriving on time
- Term dates are published in advance and are communicated in the weekly newsletter and in a separate letter to every parent. Any changes in the term date schedule are communicated more than one month in advance and communicated in a letter to the parent of every child.

Telling the children about the importance of attendance and punctuality

Children receive guidance from teachers on an individual, class and school level about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. If a child has concerns about their attendance or punctuality they are encouraged to speak to their class teacher.

Children are encouraged to walk to school and to get to school on time.

Children are encouraged to go to bed at an appropriate time so that they are not tired the next day. They are encouraged to prepare for the school day on the night before as much as possible so they are not rushed in the mornings.

There are incentive schemes in place to promote good attendance and punctuality amongst the children.

The school council is consulted with to help develop initiatives to improve school attendance and punctuality.

Children who are regularly collected late at the end of the school day may be referred to Family Support and Social Work after discussion with the school EWO.

What parents can do to help

The school works with parents and carers to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises that parents have a crucial role. If a pupil does miss school, parents/carers should inform the school of their child's absence and provide an explanation as soon as possible. The nature of the explanation determines whether the school will authorise the absence or not.

Holidays during term-time and long weekends are not acceptable reasons for absence. As mentioned above, one of the key reasons for this is not just the education of the child taking the holiday, but the effect the absence has on other children in the class. This is often compounded

by parents taking children on holiday in term time who then ask the teacher for extra homework, taking up more of their time and therefore cutting the time available for the rest of the class.

Reasons for which authorisation for absence may be granted include the death or funeral of a close relative. In these circumstances, we may ask for proof. In addition emergency medical and dental appointments (although routine check-ups should be scheduled in the holidays) and other exceptional circumstances may be authorised at the Head of School's discretion. We will also consider ethnic or religious requirements, for example, one day Religious Observance leave will be granted for all multi faith religions. We will also consider whether the leave is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness or other traumatic events. Leave is not authorised because of availability of flights or accommodation.

Where a child returns back late then we will expect to see the date they had planned to return to the UK before the start of school and the revised date. If this evidence cannot be supplied then a penalty notice may be issued.

Parents are expected to adhere to the procedure for authorised school leave. All requests for school leave should be made in writing to the Head of School and prior to the leave being arranged. An exceptional leave request form is available to request leave and can be obtained from the office.

We also advise most strongly that you do not purchase any travel documents for a trip prior to making any request for leave.

If the school is not notified of absence then the school will initiate contact with the parent on first day of absence.

If parents have any comments, concerns or complaints regarding the school attendance policy these can be addressed in writing to the Head of School or an appointment can be arranged for discussion with the Head of School. If any parents wish to work with the school in partnership to promote and implement good school attendance practice this is encouraged.

The Head of School's Role

The Head of School will consider every request for leave. The parents will need to give the proposed dates of absence and return and cogent reasons for the absence. If the child fails to return on the agreed dates it is an unauthorised absence. If an extended absence is taken without authorisation or not being contactable by the school then a child may then lose their school place and may have to apply to Camden Admission's Service for a new school place. Due to waiting lists this may not be at St Aloysius Catholic Primary School.

In the event of exceptional leave being granted and any 'extra leave' taken, as in leaving prior to the authorisation or returning late to school, the school would then reserve the right to unauthorise the whole period .

Each half-term there is an attendance and punctuality review with the EWO, the school attendance admin. lead and the Head of School. Concerns are identified and appropriate action taken. In addition to this the school attendance lead responds to teachers' referrals and concerns and checks through the registers for problems with attendance and takes appropriate action in conjunction with the school Learning Mentor and the EWO. This information is shared consistently with class teachers so that strategies can be employed to improve attendance within each class year.

The Headteacher oversees the collection and reporting of attendance data and the publication of statistics and reports on attendance to parents, pupils, governors and the Camden Children Schools and Families Directorate (CCSF).

An attendance audit is carried out and reported on in June of each year.

The role of teachers

All class teachers have a responsibility in keeping an attendance register. This is a legal document and must be completed accurately. The attendance register must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are coded according to the information received from the parent of the child. The class teacher monitors the register daily and is sensitive to emerging patterns of absence and lateness.

Class teachers encourage patterns of punctuality and good attendance by praising those children who came to school each day and arrive on time.

The class teacher reports any concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality to the School Administration Assistant – the school attendance lead.

The role of the administrative staff

The administrative staff record late arrivals each day and take telephone calls from parents or carers concerning pupil absence.

Individual pupil attendance reports are compiled on the request of the Head of School or the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The administrative staff will also prepare termly and annual returns to the local authority.

The role of the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) is responsible for monitoring, supporting and assisting good school attendance in all Camden schools. The EWO monitors school attendance registers and holds consultation meetings with the Head of School and obtains referrals from the school. The EWO may meet a parent/carer and child in school, write to parents/carers, arrange a home visit and refer to other professional agencies. The results of these interventions are reported to the school. Failure to comply with the interventions of the EWO can lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or magistrate court proceedings. This policy brings your attention to the right of the school to refer a child to EWS for persistent unauthorised leave who can issue a Penalty Notice which is charged at £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. If payment is not paid within 28 days the Education Welfare Service may seek proceedings against the parent in the Magistrates Court. If the case is proven in Court this can attract a fine up to £2500 and/or or up to three months in prison, and a potential criminal record.

In what circumstances would the school bring in the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)?

Before contacting the EWO the school will make every attempt to make contact with the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss the

problem. If this is unsuccessful the school gives warning of referral to a EWO. A referral may be made to the EWO under the following circumstances:

- 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence
- More than 10 days of authorised leave
- A holiday taken without permission
- A pupil who has been more than 25 minutes late on a minimum number more than eight occasions within an eight week period.
- 90% or less attendance

A Penalty Notice/s is issued per parent per child based on the school contact details. If a parent moves out of the family home they will need to produce proof of their new address dated with the last 12 months or they may still receive a Penalty Notice. Acceptable documents for this would be a tenancy agreement, Council Tax statement, Housing Benefit form or a driver's license, all stating that the parent lives at the claimed new address.

The role of Governors

There is a School Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance and procedures whose responsibility it is to be aware of general attendance issues and along with the whole Governing Board inform and oversee school attendance performance initiatives.

Reports and statistics and initiatives to improve school attendance will be shared and consulted on with the Governing Board and documented in Governors meeting minutes (made available to all parents) and the Governors Annual Report.

What happens after a long absence?

The school is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of pupils returning after significant periods of absence and will support the smooth reintegration of pupils both academically and socially. In such circumstances the school works with parents, carers and pupil towards an agreed reintegration plan which may include opportunities for counselling and feedback, peer support and mentoring and an agreed review period.

The Timetable

School starts at 9am. Children can arrive at school from 8.45am and are expected to be in class by 9am.

School ends at 3:15pm in the Lower School and 3:20pm in the Upper School. Parent and carers should meet children unless extended hours arrangements are in place.

Each parent/ carer must complete a form with contact telephone number details and address of anybody who is designated to pick up your child from school. Should parents wish to change this list of names the school will need written consent from the parent in advance.

Children in Year 5 and 6 are permitted to arrive and leave school unsupervised on the condition that the school has a permission letter from the parent.

A child cannot be picked up or brought to school by anyone under the age of 14. Children over the age of 14 who are themselves attending school should not be in charge of picking up children from St Aloysius Catholic Primary School if their school is further than 5 minutes travel time away from St Aloysius Catholic Primary School.

Term dates

School term dates are published in advance and can be found on the school website.

Staff training days (inset days) are included in the term dates schedule. Parents or carers will receive written notice of any changes in term dates. Those changes would also be published in the calendar on the weekly school newsletter.

MONITORING THE POLICY

The Head of School and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the policy by regular reviews and observations.

The Head Teacher must publicise the policy and bring it to the attention of pupils, parents and staff at least once a year.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY SUMMARY FOR PARENTS

1. Punctuality:

Children need to be in class by 9.am and must be collected promptly. If those collecting children are not the primary parents or carers the school must be informed in writing. A pupil cannot be dropped or collected by anyone under 14. The registers close at 9.15am and any absence after this time is treated as unauthorised.

2. Attendance:

Full attendance is expected during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances do not include holidays, long weekends, leaving for holidays one day before the end of term or visits to family or friends. Parents must understand this when they place their child in the school.

Exceptional absences should be requested in writing in advance from the Head of School.

Acceptable reasons generally include close family bereavements and funerals and emergency medical and dental appointments (although routine check ups should be scheduled outside school hours). The Head of School may also consider ethnic or religious requirements or if the leave is important for the cohesion of the family following traumatic events.

3. Unauthorised absences:

Unauthorised absences are treated seriously by the school and the local authority. Initially we try to resolve any such absences by contacting parents directly, but if there are persistent problems of either punctuality or attendance the local authority is informed. Although it is very much a last resort, ultimately, fines can be imposed on parents. Pupils may also lose their place at the school. Each pupil's punctuality and attendance record will also be passed on to any school they propose to attend after they leave St Aloysius Catholic Primary School.