

St. Winifred's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



Agreed by the Teaching and Learning Committee: November 2021

Review Date: November 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

At St Winifred's Catholic Primary School:

- We nourish a happy, safe and supportive school community in which every individual is welcomed, valued and respected for being unique
- We inspire a search for excellence by offering the best possible learning environment
- We provide a Christ-centred education, helping our children to develop and grow in faith and teaching them to promote the Gospel values of love of neighbour, fairness and forgiveness, both in school and in the wider community.

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Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

St Winifred's Catholic Primary School is committed to the continually raising the achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance and punctuality is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at St Winifred's Catholic Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy, the school will call the child's home to ascertain the reason for absence.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 am. The bell is rung at 8:45 am and the main gates are closed. All pupils who arrive late must report, with their parent or carer, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded. Children arriving after 9.15 am are marked in the register with an 'unauthorised late mark'.

Parents or carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school. We state that 'the earlier we can intervene the easier it will be to change things and working together we can make sure your child thrives and achieves at school.'

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 8.45am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. (See section above)

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments
- c) 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.
- d) If a child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- e) Where there are concerns about a child's attendance the school will ask to see a medical certificate for absences of 5 days or more. If there is a cost to this the school will pay.

The Role of the School Staff

The head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the local authority. The head teacher monitors attendance together with Admin staff.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. The admin staff will mark in children who arrive after registers have been returned to the office. They will telephone the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact.

It is the responsibility of office attendance admin officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there is no answer a home visit will be carried out by two members of staff and if there is no response a letter will be posted through the door. If there is no immediate response to this, social services will be informed.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Two contact numbers are obtained for all pupils

Lateness

At St Winifred's Catholic Primary School the register is taken at 8:45 am. Afternoon registers are taken at 12.30 for Nursery, Reception, Years 1, 2 and 3; 1.30 for Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils arriving after these times must report to the school office where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:15 and 5 minutes after children return to class in the afternoon. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the head teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The head teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the head teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the head teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

When an application is made for authorised absence, the head teacher will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history.

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimize poor attendance and punctuality through

- Rewarding classes and children for good attendance and punctuality
- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The Inclusion Manager contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve
- The head teacher writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

Persistent absence

The threshold for 'persistent absence' is 10%. Your child will be considered as persistently absent using the following criteria:

Term	Number of sessions missed since the start of the year (a session is half a day)
Autumn 1	7 or more
Autumn 2	14 or more
Spring 1	20 or more
Spring 2	25 or more
Summer 1	31 or more
Summer 2	38 or more

Support from the school

The school understands that from time to time situations may arise which make it difficult for parents to ensure their child is in school. For example

- Housing issues
- Health issues
- Children's behavioural issues

Where there are concerns about attendance we will contact you as soon as these arise:

- By letter to raise the concern
- Followed up by a meeting with the head teacher if there is no improvement

Local Authority Action

When there are concerns about a child's attendance and it does not appear to be improving, the school will refer to the local authority attendance service who may consider the following:

Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Home visits
- multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the head teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed. The AWO advise that if a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted St Winifred's Catholic, that a referral is made to CME team.