



**ST. AUGUSTINE'S**

**CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*"A learning community united by Christ and  
the teaching of the Gospel"*

## **Policy 4G - Attendance**

**Approved: February 2014**

**Review: Annually**

**Head Teachers signature:**

**Governor's signature:**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

At St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School we view regular attendance as an essential part of a child's academic and social success. Learning and friendship opportunities are enhanced by sustained periods of unbroken attendance, and we rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved. Good attendance means that children usually make good, consistent progress in their school work. If a child is registered at school, parents and carers have a duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child attends regularly and is punctual.

### **The School Day**

Children are encouraged to be in their class room by 8.30am, at 8.40am the school bell rings and the official start to the school day begins. Registers are marked by 9.00am and again at 1.00pm.

### **Punctuality**

The school has a clear policy for lateness. Through newsletters and other forums parents are aware that the school has high expectations regarding punctuality. If a parent knows that their child is going to be late i.e. because of an appointment, the school should be informed beforehand. Children who arrive after 8.40am must be accompanied into reception and an explanation given. Registers are closed at 9.30am; any child who arrives after this time will be marked as 'U', which is an absence for the whole of the morning session.

Persistent lateness to school after the register is closed which is equivalent to 10 sessions in any five week period, will result in the liable parent or carer receiving a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 20 school days to effect an improvement

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The law states that all children of school age who are registered at a school, must attend regularly. Parents or carers should advise the school by 9.30am each day of absence; the reason and an expected date of return. A message can be left on the answer phone. If a child is absent without explanation, parents or carers will be contacted by the school to ascertain the reason for the absence.

The law requires that all schools must show the difference between authorised and unauthorised absences. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents or carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence has been received. Absence will be categorised as follows:

- Illness (I) In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent or carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. However, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually take the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

- Medical/Dental Appointments (M) Parents and carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. The appointment card must be seen by the school.
- Other Authorised Circumstances (C) This is related to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement.

### **Persistent Absence**

Research shows that there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Each half term parents and carers of children with less than 92% attendance will receive a letter from the school, informing them how many lessons they have missed and indicating the detrimental effect absence can have on their child's progress. Parents and carers are encouraged to improve the level before the end following half term.

Where parents or carers fail or refuse to engage with support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School will consider the use of legal sanctions. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent or carer fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child in school, he or she is guilty of an offence. Local Authorities can use various legal powers, including:

- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- School Attendance Order
- Penalty Notice
- Prosecution

If taken to court each person with parental responsibility is liable to a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

### **Holidays and leave requests during term time**

From September 1st 2013, changes to the law relating to school attendance came into force. The reference in law to Headteacher's being able (at their discretion) to agree up to 10 days of leave of absence has been removed. This means that holidays in term time will not be granted. If there is ever an exceptional reason why your child needs a leave of absence then parents/carers will have to complete an "exceptional leave" form explaining the necessity for that request, including any necessary evidence (Appendix A).

Where there is unauthorised absence penalty notices will be issued according to the new law as follows:

The periods during which a penalty notice should be paid has been shortened. For unauthorised absence that occurs from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 onwards, the amount of penalty to be paid will be:

**£60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and**

**£120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days.**

Where a penalty notice remains unpaid, legal action will be pursued by the local authority. These new regulations are according to national legal changes and St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School is obliged to uphold them. An extended period of absence could result in your child being taken off roll.

### **Family Support**

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School values all of its pupils. In order to maintain high levels of attendance and support, we will work with the families of children who may be having difficulties in school which may lead to absences, to identify the reasons for poor attendance and attempt to resolve those difficulties.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents or carers and the child, and maybe the class teacher or Headteacher
- Support from the school's Learning Mentor
- Referrals to support agencies
- Rewards systems
- Support from the school's Family Support Worker
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and is brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils, i.e. teachers are to keep a copy of any information given to the pupils (e.g. newsletters) so that can be given to the pupils on their return.

### **Attendance Awards**

- At the end of each week - The class with the highest attendance for the week will receive a certificate and trophy during Friday assembly. The class will also receive £5 to save and spend on a whole class activity at the end of the academic year
- At the end of each term and the end of the academic year - Children receive the following certificates during assembly: 95% attendance- Bronze, 98% attendance - Silver, 100% attendance – Gold

**Governing Body**

Parents are notified of these procedures in regular newsletters, new parents induction and on the website. The Headteacher reports termly to the Governing Body on attendance. The school has attendance targets to meet in an academic year.

## Appendix A

### St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School

#### Exceptional Leave

The school is very reluctant for a child to miss any part of his/her education.

1. There are a number of sources regarding attendance, including our school newsletter, the school website [www.st-augustines.coventry.sch.uk](http://www.st-augustines.coventry.sch.uk) and the DfE (Department for Education) [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) Term dates are published well in advance on the school website.

2. The reference in law to Headteacher's being able (at their discretion) to agree up to 10 days of leave of absence has been removed. **This means that holidays in term time will not be granted.** Under Government regulations, leave of absence can only be granted by the Headteacher in the case of exceptional circumstances and is for a maximum of **10 days**. The leave must be authorised **before** any tickets are booked and where possible, be at least 4 weeks before the beginning of the absence.

**The decision to authorise absence rests with the school and once the decision is made, it is final.**

3. When considering exceptional circumstances the Headteacher will take into account:

- Attendance - A child with any less than 95% attendance is unlikely to be granted extended authorised absence, regardless of the reasons for their prior absence.
- Proximity to exam dates – No child in year 2 or 6 will be granted leave.

4. If permission is granted, children must ensure they are up to date with their school work before they leave and in addition, it will be parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their son/daughter makes up any missed work in his/her **own time** upon return to school.

5. If a child becomes ill whilst abroad please note that before returning to school they **must** be seen by their GP in the UK and be certified fit to return.

6. If permission is granted photocopies of airline or travel tickets will be required by the school office **before** travelling.

Should you decide to take your child out of school without the Headteacher's permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice by the Children and Families First Team under S23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 will be issued and may result in a fine of up to £120. If a child does not return to school, they may be taken off the school roll.

**Please note: Local Authority Guidance states that if two Penalty Notices have already been issued for periods of unauthorised leave, a Penalty Notice will NOT be issued on the third occasion and you will be taken straight to Court under the higher level aggravated offence.** This means that you may be subject to a much more severe penalty i.e. a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody or, a community order which may involve you doing a number of hours of unpaid work.

**ST. AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Application form for Exceptional Student Leave**

**Please read the information overleaf before completing this form**

The school will only authorise this absence if this form is completed and returned to the school **4 weeks before** you leave. In the event of an emergency situation at very short notice, please contact the school office who will refer to the Headteacher as necessary.

CHILD'S DETAILS	
Name	Class
Address	Telephone Number
PROPOSED DESTINATION	
DATES	
First day of absence	
Last day of absence	
Date return to school	
REASON FOR REQUEST	
ANY OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION OR MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES	

**IMPORTANT:** If your child is ill whilst away from school or he/she returns to the UK feeling unwell, it is essential that your child is examined by your local G.P. A medical note confirming that the child is not suffering from any infections or contagious illnesses and is fit to attend school **must** be received by the school before the child returns to school.

I agree to the conditions outlined in this document.	
I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my son/daughter makes up any missed work in his/her own time upon return to school.	
I have read the school's extended authorised absence policy.	
<b>SIGNED</b> .....	
<b>(Person with Parental Responsibility)</b>	
<b>PRINT NAME</b> .....	<b>DATE</b> .....

