

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2016

Approved on:

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2016

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance provided by the Department for Education. Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both National and local attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Please note the specific attendance guidelines appropriate to Nursery which may affect NEF Funding (see Appendix 2).

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendances out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded, in the first instance, Reason for absence not yet provided 'N'.

Lateness

Doors open at 8.50 am. The registers will remain open for fifteen minutes until 9.05 am. A pupil arriving after 9.05am will be marked as late. Registers close at 9.15 am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own home to notify the parent/carer. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting may be arranged to discuss what support can be offered.

First Day Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day stating the reason for the absence. A note should then be sent into school on the day the child returns explaining the absence. If no contact is made by parents/carers explaining the absence on the first day, the school will text to try to secure an explanation. This will be followed up with a phone call from Mrs

West (School Administrator) if there is no response to the text. Where the school is unable to make contact by phone, a letter will be sent. If, after the child returns to school, there is no explanation of absence given by the parent/carers, the school will write again. The absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' after two weeks, if no explanation can be obtained.

Regular register checks are carried out by our administrator and Headteacher. At the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms an Attendance Summary is sent out to all parents/carers. The Head teacher will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when attendance falls below 85% and strategies to improve this have not been effective. The EWO will formally monitor the pupil's attendance and work closely with parents/carers to achieve this.

Persistent Absence (defined in legislation as 15% or more absences)

Either authorised or unauthorised, a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment.

Onward Referral to Support Services (EWOs etc)

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for five school days will be discussed with the school's EWO.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the school may refer to the School Health Adviser/School Nurse, etc, if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school will seek advice from the school's EWO.

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 brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are any attendance concerns about the pupils, that may require further investigation, then the notes may be retained for a longer period.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- The pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause';

- 'The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs';
- The school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for any of the following:
 - The child's transport to and from school,
 - Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
 - Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met;
- The pupil is attending a viewing for a place at another school;
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition;
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit;
- The pupil is participating in an approved public performance;
- Exceptional circumstances, leave of absence may be authorised by the Head teacher.

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming;
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings;
- The pupil is shopping during school hours;
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday);
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday.

Requests for Absence in Term Time

Amendments to the 2006 school attendance regulations mean that, as from September 2013, Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It removes all references to family holiday and extended leave and parents no longer have any entitlement to request up to 10 school days off during an academic year. Head teachers may only allow absence for exceptional circumstances and they also determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the absence is granted. Parents/carers must write a letter to the Head teacher, in advance, if there are exceptional circumstances and a child is going to be absent during term time.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2013

The 2007 Regulations set out procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. From 1st September 2013 parents must pay £60 within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School will work to provide an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed, that pupils feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and any Disability.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, correlate attendance with achievement, set targets, and support and inform policy/practice.
- Excellent attendance and improved attendance awards will be presented at the end of each term and for 100% attendance at the end of the school year in July.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The Headteacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc, of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be given suitable support upon their return to school.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period will, when appropriate, have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will include attendance matters in the Curriculum and School Improvement Committee and the termly reports to the school's Governing Body.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a school Senior Manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school attendance targets for the next two years are:

2016/17	95%
2017/18	96%

Register Security

- The electronic registers must be safely saved after each registration period in class and sent to the main office immediately on closing.
- The Administration Team will update the registers from the list of lates provided; oversee late arrivals from 9.05am onwards. Mrs West will contact parents on the first day of absence.

The Registration System

The school will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information:

CODE	MEANING
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstance
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late after registers closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Y	School closure due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Alternatively, electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least 3 years. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid).

Signed: _____ (Headteacher) **Date:** _____

Appendix 1

Request for Authorised Leave of Absence Form To Allow Pupils on a Family Holiday Due to Exceptional Circumstances

The Education(Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 give the Governing Body, acting through the Headteacher, the permission to grant up to 10 days leave of absence to allow pupils to accompany parents for a family holiday under exceptional circumstances.

This leave is discretionary and is not an automatic entitlement.

Request for leave must be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance.

Please be aware that holiday absence, even though it may have been authorised, is still recognised as an absence and will be treated the same as absence due to illness. This may in turn lead to your child's attendance falling below 90% which could possibly result in a referral being made to the Educational Welfare Officer. The school will not provide work for pupils to complete whilst on holiday. Pupils that have already have an attendance below 85% will not be granted holiday leave.

Parent/Carer Checklist

- Authorisation will not be given if:
- Your child's attendance is already below 85%
- The circumstances are not exceptional (e.g. cheaper in non term-time, better weather, tagged onto the end or beginning of a school break)
- Supporting documents are not provided
- The request is not received by the school four weeks before the first day of the proposed absence
- The request is for time between the return to school after the Easter Holiday until the end of June (due to ongoing assessments)

To the Headteacher:

Name of
Child _____ Year: _____

I request permission for the above named child/children to accompany me on my family holiday during school term time. I believe that I have met the criteria outlined in the checklist above.

Date from: _____ To: _____ Total Number of School
Days: _____

I have attached a letter and supporting documents outlining the exceptional circumstances

Office Use:

Request for authorised absence confirmed or not (with reasons if the request is declined):

Yes/No.....

.....

.....

Signed _____ Headteacher

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Nursery Specifics

Introduction

1. St Patrick's Community Nursery are advised not to hold places for children who do not attend the setting unless they are on holiday or are ill. Parents are expected to inform the office if their child is unable to attend for any reason and we will record this information.
2. We endeavour to promote good attendance and keep registers of funded children, as these may be requested as evidence during any LA Audit process.

Children's Holidays

3. Funding will be paid for a child that goes on holiday for a period of up to four weeks in any one LA designated term. If a child goes on holiday for a period of longer than four weeks, only four weeks will be funded and the parent will be liable for any additional weeks. Where children take extended holidays and do not return to the setting on the expected return date, we are entitled to terminate the place. Funding will not be recouped but we are encouraged to offer the place to the next eligible child on our waiting list, provided they are not already receiving funding elsewhere. Parents are reminded that the early education sessions prepare children for school, when term time holidays will be actively discouraged and adopt a similar approach.

Reduced Attendance and Non-Attendance

4. Attendance records are regularly monitored. If the reason for a child's absence is unknown for two consecutive days or more, we will contact the parent to establish the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If attendance does not improve within two weeks we will write to the parent explaining that the place could be terminated within two weeks (i.e. four weeks after non-attendance began). If children do not attend the full number of hours for which they are being funded (i.e. reduced attendance) this should also be monitored. Parents should be contacted as soon as possible and preferably no later than two weeks after a period of reduced attendance has started. We will endeavour to remind the parent of the importance of regular attendance and that the child's funded hours entitlement may be reduced and that their place may be at risk. This practice is important as should an audit highlight examples of non-attendance or reduced attendance and the we are unable to produce evidence of attempting to contact the parent, funding may be recouped. Exceptions will be made for children with additional needs and these should be notified to the LA as soon as possible. Suitable evidence to be produced could include telephone logs, copies of letters or emails, records of discussions with parents etc. The overall principle to be borne

in mind is that Early Education Funding is paid on a participation basis and as such may be reclaimed by the LA, if appropriate.

Children's Illness

5. If a child is unable to attend due to serious illness, a place should be held and funding can be claimed in full where the child is expected to return before the end of term. A doctor's note can be requested at the provider's discretion.
6. Providers are required to keep a record of all children's absences due to illness, which may be requested as evidence during any LA Audit process.

Late Drop Offs and Early Pick Ups

7. Where a parent consistently drops a child off late or collects a child early from their funded early education session, we will endeavour to establish the reason for this. It may be that we are able to offer the parent a more suitable session time to avoid this happening. If not, we will contact the LA who may request funding be repaid, if appropriate.

Notice Periods

8. Notice periods are clearly indicated to parents in the nursery documents issued at the beginning of the year. The LA will pay a provider a maximum of four weeks' notice period for any child leaving the setting where the provider can produce a signed parental declaration form. No notice can be paid for any child who leaves where there is no signed agreement between the parent and St Patrick's. No further funding can be paid for any child at a second provider where they are still serving notice at the first provider. Providers should therefore not accept in children for funded sessions at any point during a term without checking that appropriate notice has been given at the first provider. Notice periods will include any official school holiday periods as notified by the LA, including half terms. For example, a parent may give notice at the end of the Autumn Term on 21st December. The notice period of four weeks therefore includes the two non funded weeks over the Christmas break and would expire on 18th January. Where an existing funded child does not return to the setting as expected in September after the Summer break, up to four weeks notice can be claimed if the provider can produce a signed Parental Declaration Form. Providers may not claim this notice period if the child has never previously claimed early education funding with them.
9. In exceptional circumstances a child may be funded at two settings for an overlap 'notice period'. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, the family suddenly becoming homeless, a family fleeing domestic violence, a family being placed in emergency temporary accommodation or a child being placed in the care of others (e.g. a foster carer.)

Providers' Closures

10. We will not be funded for any period of closure which lasts longer than five days. This applies whether the reason for the closure was planned or unforeseen (for example, planned building / redecoration work or fire / flood). Exceptions may apply for periods of industrial action. It is accepted that a provider may have no alternative but to close for occasional days in certain circumstances such as heating breakdowns etc. Funding will not be recouped unless the period of closure lasts longer than five days and providers should put in place strategies to deal with the problem.
11. We may claim up to five separate training or staff development days in any one academic year. Parents will be notified of these dates as soon as possible and with at least 28 days' notice. The LA will also be notified. Funding will not be recouped.
12. Funding for official public bank holidays will be paid where the holiday falls within term time.