



St John Vianney Catholic School

Love one another as I have loved you



Attendance Policy

Mission statement

“St John Vianney School is an academic community which is characterised by the Gospel Spirit of Peace, Justice and Love. All that we do and say in our school will be dominated by Jesus’ words “Love one another as I have loved you”. Our school rules are based on this statement and carried in “our hearts and our heads” and reflected in the life and work of our school”.

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Principles

Daily attendance for all school age children on our roll is a legal requirement, therefore, St John Vianney School fully endorses the government and Local Authority requirements for attendance and registration. The Governors and staff of St John Vianney School recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality to personal character development, achievement in education and success in the future. The government expectation for attendance is 97%. 97%+ is deemed to be the level of attendance which gives pupils the greatest opportunity to achieve the best of their potential in school both academically and socially. Anything less than this gives St John Vianney School cause for concern.

As our role is to assist parents who are the primary educators of their children, we aim to work together with parents/carers to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We also acknowledge and seek to address the possible safeguarding implications of a child's persistent and/or unexplained absence from school.

Our Attendance Policy is framed within the roles of our Mission Statement.

Rights, Responsibilities and Roles

St John Vianney School:

- School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- We will work closely with parents and carers to encourage and reward good attendance and to investigate promptly if absenteeism or lateness give cause for concern.
- We will keep parents and carers fully informed of their child's attendance and punctuality and contact parent on the first day of absence if their child is absent from school without notification from an adult.
- We will work closely with relevant agencies to safeguard children and ensure good attendance.
- We will act promptly when a child's whereabouts is unknown by following our procedures and then the Local Authority's protocol for Children Missing from Education.

Our Parents/Carers:

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School believes that the involvement of parents is a key factor in addressing attendance issues and will ensure that all parents and carers are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to attendance.

Parents/carers are required by law to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance. The Governing Body has endorsed the Local Authority use of parenting contracts and penalty notices for parents or persistent truants.

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped, dressed in full school uniform and in a fit condition to concentrate of their learning.
- Parents/carers will inform the school of the reason for any absence by phone call, text via Schoolcomms or email by 9.30 a.m. on the first morning of absence, and in advance if appropriate. If parents advise by phone call they must also confirm the absence in writing when the child returns to school.
- Parents/carers will normally avoid the making of medical appointments during school hours. This includes opticians, dentist, doctors and orthodontist appointments. Hospital appointments during school hours are accepted.
- On the rare occasions when an appointment in school hours is unavoidable, parents/carers will make arrangements to collect their child from school and return them as soon as possible after the appointment.
- Parents/carers will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- Requests for leave of absence will be made at least four weeks in advance by completing the appropriate form.

Registration

The legal status of school registers is regularly stressed to all school staff and meticulous effort is made to ensure they are accurately kept. New staff are provided with training in both the detail of accurate register marking and methods and strategies for encouraging pupils to be punctual and regular in their attendance.

It is a legal requirement to keep accurate registers of student's attendance.

The official school day begins with registers being taken at 8.55 a.m.

The register is also taken at the start of afternoon lessons as part of our safeguarding policy.

Lateness

The importance placed on punctuality is explained to parents when they first enrol their child in the school. Poor punctuality gives the pupil who is late a difficult and negative start to their day and disrupts the teaching and learning of the whole class. The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings, sharing news and preparing the class ready for the business of learning, is regularly be stressed to parents.

- School doors open to children at 8.40 a.m. (Please do not drop your child off before 8.40 a.m. as they will be unsupervised until the doors open.)
- School starts at 8.50 a.m. with registration at 8.55 a.m.

The school gates are locked at 8.50 a.m., if a pupil arrives after this time they should enter school through the Reception entrance. An adult will be required to sign in the child and provide a reason for the lateness. This log can be used as prosecution evidence in court proceedings in the event of persistent lateness.

Any pupil arriving after the register has been taken will be deemed late and registered with an L code. If a student is late eight times during a half term parents will receive a letter advising of the number of times the child has been late and requesting an improvement in punctuality.

Children should be collected at 3.15 p.m. from their classrooms/key stage entrance. If a child is not collected on time they will be brought to the library area to wait. Parents who are regularly late to collect their children will be contacted by the Learning Mentor to discuss the reasons.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is the role of the school to decide whether an absence is to be authorised. Parents and carers must inform school of the reason for any absence by phone call/text or email on the first morning of the absence. If advised by phone written confirmation of the absence will be required when the pupil returns to school. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises the absence.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness (please do not send your child into school if they have sickness or diarrhoea – please allow 24 hours from last sickness before your child returns to school)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment (wherever possible these should be made outside of school hours)
- Days of religious observance;
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement or catastrophic event at home.

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- Absence due to sibling or parent illness;
- Birthdays, shopping or any other activity that should not be undertaken if it prevents pupils from attending school.
- Holidays unless authorised by the Head Teacher.

Requests for exceptional leave of absence

Any request for absence should be made at least four weeks in advance using the application for exceptional leave form (available from the school office) and should explain fully the reason for requesting the absence, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. We appreciate that on very rare occasions such absences are appropriate. The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application. The law allows schools to authorise absences in exceptional circumstances

Decisions on authorising absence requests will be made by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, taking the following consideration:

- The amount of time requested;
- Age of the child;
- Proximity of SATS and assessments (no holidays authorised during May);
- Previous attendance and punctuality record;
- Pupil's educational needs;
- Student's ability to catch up with any missed work;
- General welfare of the child;
- Purpose of leave requested;
- Circumstances of the request;
- When the request was made;
- National and Local guidance of the authorisation of absence;
- Information provided by the Educational Welfare Officer *EWO) or representatives of any other agencies.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response given the reason for the decision. Letters approving requests will state the dates of absence, parents/carers are required to contact school if anything delays the student's return to school. If a student fails to return when expected, we will inform the relevant authorities. Letters refusing requests will explain the reason and that ignoring the refusal will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded, which may in turn lead to Penalty Notice being served.

Approved Educational Activities

There are a number of activities that form a valuable part of a pupil's education yet take place out of school. These include activities run by other providers where participation by pupils from St John Vianney School has been arranged by the school for instance, sporting activities.

Requests to take part in activities arranged by others, will only be approved if we believe that the activity satisfies the regulatory requirements. Written confirmation of the activity from the providers will be required. Consideration of such requests will include:

- The nature of the activity
- The benefits to the student
- The effect on the student's education
- The time of the activity.

Procedures for Following up Absences/Lateness

All unexplained absences will be followed up on the first day of absence by the admin office and/or the Learning Mentor by telephone call and/or text message.

Please be aware that if we do not receive notification of the reason for a child's absence by 9.30 a.m. we will telephone the contact numbers on our records and, if we are unable to contact anyone, we will visit the child's home to check on their safety. If we are still unable to make contact we will then telephone the police. This is in line with our Safeguarding procedures

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

The curriculum is monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used to engage and enthuse different groups of children. Student voice feedback is used in the planning and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching and learning. Attendance statistics are collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Good attendance is monitored and rewarded termly. Pupils with 100% attendance for the academic year receive particular praise and rewards, as do those who have responded to intervention and made improvements. The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents. The school aims to help pupils develop their own self-motivation for daily, punctual attendance. Parents/carers are kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils with attendance of between 85% and 97% will be monitored by the Learning Mentor, Class teachers and Head teacher.

Where there have been three broken weeks of attendance during a half term parents will be contacted either by letter, phone, or a home visit with an invitation to an attendance meeting and strategies for improvement will be put in place.

In the case of persistent absence due to illness parents will be requested to provide medical evidence from their doctors to confirm the medical reasons for the child's absence. Please note appointment cards are not sufficient evidence.

Where there are safeguarding concerns or no satisfactory outcome has been achieved after consulting with parents, the school may do one of the following:

- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer
- Seek to obtain a Common Assessment Framework Assessment with a view to addressing the needs of the child through multi-agency support
- Apply to the LA for a penalty Notice (see below)

The Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service, monitors attendance of children with less than 85%:

- Where there are no firm medical reasons for absence
- When absence is unauthorised
- When absence or lateness gives cause for concern.

Regular meeting are held with the school's EWO in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/punctuality is a cause for concern

In the event of persistent unauthorised absence from school, when strategies set up for improvement have failed, the Education Welfare Service will send formal letters warning of prosecution and prepare and present prosecution files to court for non-attendance. (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

Penalty Notices

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School recognises that the Penalty Notice Regulations, which came into force in February 2004, entitle the Head Teacher to apply to the Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice with respect to any parents whose child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 5-week period and will be used as a strategy to change attendance patterns.

Removal from Roll

In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from a receiving school. Should no notification be received, the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service. If unsuccessful, a missing person form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority and when notified by them, the pupil will be removed from roll after four weeks of absence.

The school will make it known to all parents that if a pupil fails to return to school within 10 days of the agreed return date, following a holiday, they also may be removed from roll. No pupil however will be removed from a school roll under these circumstances unless they have been absent from school for 4 weeks.

Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

Reports

- Individual attendance and punctuality data is recorded on pupil's reports.
- The Head Teacher reports on attendance as part of her termly report to governors.
- The Head Teacher sends attendance statistics on a termly basis to the DCSF and to the Principle Education Welfare Officer.
- School attendance data is recorded by the DCSF on the on-line School Profile.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance and the head teacher will produce an annual report. The governing body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels. The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual governors' report.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.