

# St. John Bosco RC Primary School



# Attendance Policy

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# Attendance Policy

## **RATIONALE:**

At St. John Bosco RC Primary School we take attendance and punctuality very seriously. We are committed to supporting the attendance of our pupils and respond to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance, so that each child is able to reach his/her full potential. Our aim is to ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the importance of good attendance and we take a positive and proactive approach by encouraging parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children. Through this ethos, we aspire to improve levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce absenteeism.

Research shows that there are clear links between good attendance and high achievement.

*“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.*

*Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.*

*Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”*

School attendance statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE August 2013.

## **WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT:**

### ***Learning:***

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### ***Safeguarding:***

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:**

### ***The Law relating to attendance***

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- to age, ability and aptitude and
- to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

### ***The Law relating to safeguarding***

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

The school adheres to the legal requirements laid down by the DFE and:

- is open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year (190 days)
- maintains computerised attendance registers in accordance with regulations
- accurately records and monitors all absenteeism and lateness
- clearly distinguishes between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DFE
- submits absence returns and publishes information relating to levels of attendance and absence in reports to governors
- sets annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations

### **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents and carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

#### **Staff Responsibilities:**

##### **The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and will:**

- regularly communicate attendance information to parents through the school website and Newsletters
- collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement - for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school
- provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and on such connected issues as the appropriate categorisation of absence
- identify clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness
- make provision for first-day of absence contact in relation to pupils who are known to be poor attendees or who might otherwise be considered to be at risk
- identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism
- develop strategies which recognise and celebrate pupils' attendance achievements
- set up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services such as Educational Social Workers
- stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time
- help create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, an inappropriate curriculum, etc.

##### **Class Teachers will:**

- take the attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions in accordance with appropriate guidance
- inform the School Office of any absentees, particularly those who are a cause for concern
- where reasons for pupil absence are unknown, to follow up reasons on their return to school and change the register code appropriately

##### **The School Business Manager will:**

- take telephone messages from parents/carers on the first day of absence and inform class teachers of reasons for absence so that registers can be changed accordingly
- telephone / text parents to find out reasons for absence when no notification has been given, particularly with children who are a cause for concern
- monitor registers to ensure guidelines are followed and entries are accurate
- produce electronic reports where appropriate
- Work alongside the Headteacher in monitoring patterns of absence

##### **Governors will:**

- discuss attendance data, including trends and patterns at termly meetings, acting upon any issues which arise
- review the Attendance Policy on an annual basis

**Parents should:**

- ensure that their children attend the school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn, as required by law
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence
- not book family holidays during term-time; where this is unavoidable, parents should put their request in writing to the Headteacher, outlining the reasons for the absence
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend so that problems can be dealt with at an early stage.

**UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required by telephone call, in writing or by text.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark in the register;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays; and
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed (See Holidays in Term Time Policy)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

We have a duty to report termly on Children Missing Out On Education (CMOOE) to the local authority.

St. John Bosco RC Primary School offers an open door policy to solving problems, however small and the Headteacher is available to speak to parents whenever possible.

**Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. When a child has reached the 95% or below mark for any reasons, including only genuine absences, the Headteacher will contact parents to alert them and offer support.

**Lateness:**

When a child misses the start of the school day they can miss work, important information and news for the day from their class teacher. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence. The school day starts at 8.55 am and we expect children to be in the yard ready to be brought into school by their class teacher at that time. Registers will be marked at 9.00am and children will receive a late mark if they are not present in the class. The register will be closed 15 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If a child is persistently late parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

**Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this. (See Holidays in Term Time Policy).

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed by Governors annually or sooner should new guidance be issued.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Review Date:** October 2018