

## **St Cuthbert's C of E Academy Infants and Pre-School**

### **Attendance Policy**

**Review Date: December 2024**

#### **Philosophy**

At St Cuthbert's C of E Academy Infants and Pre-school we believe children have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach in an atmosphere free from disruption and poor behaviour. To help us achieve this we strive to create a caring Christian ethos where everyone is valued. We have chosen six Christian values which underpin school life.

These are:

- Friendship
- Love
- Respect
- Honesty
- Forgiveness
- Courage

#### **Aims**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for any child to succeed at school and regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Every school day missed has an impact on their learning and persistent absenteeism means children fall behind significantly and are at risk of not achieving their full potential.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

It is important that pupils are on time at the start of the school day so that teachers can begin the lesson with all pupils present. Having a good routine and being punctual helps children understand the significance of being organised and arriving promptly everyday helps prepare the children for when they grow up and are ready for a life beyond school.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years and remains across the whole of their education.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

As an Academy this policy complies with our funding agreement and our Articles of Association.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Governing Body also holds the Head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is:

- Implemented consistently across the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### The School Admin/Office Staff

The school admin staff

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers and Head teacher to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Supports the Head teacher when issuing fixed-penalty notices

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office within the specified timeframe.

### **Recording Attendance**

#### **Attendance Register**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See the DfE website for attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Using the word 'registration'

- The term register can carry several meanings, such as:
- The exact time when the register is taken
- The period of time from a register opening to a register closing
- The period of time in which pupils are expected to arrive in school, at the end of which the register is taken
- The overall process of recording attendance.

At St Cuthbert's C of E Academy Infants and Pre-School we use the term registration to mean the period of time from the register opening to a register closing.

Pupils must arrive for school at 8.40 am on each school day ready for register to be taken in class.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40 am and will be completed by the teacher within 10 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be completed by the teacher within 10 minutes.

### **Unplanned Absence**

Parent/Carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health please contact the school by 8.30 am or as soon as practically possible. There is an answering machine in the school office so a message can be left at any time before 8.30 am.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

We will follow up any unexplained absence or lateness with a phone call and/or letter and a possible home welfare visit after the school has notified the Local Authority of a child's absence.

Absences and punctuality are monitored regularly by the school and Education Welfare Officer. Attendance is a legal requirement which is enforced by our school and our Local Authority.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

### **Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### **Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

We track the punctuality of all pupils and will ask to meet with families if lateness becomes a recurring issue. Any pupil with below 90% attendance or where a child is persistently being late for school or being collected early from school, will be referred to the Local Authority.

### **Following up Absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason; ensure proper safeguarding action is taken when necessary; identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- Children whose attendance falls below 90% will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of parents /carers who give a low priority to attendance.
- All registers are checked, and absences monitored daily.
- Parents will be informed by the school where their child's absence is causing concern.

- After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents/carers, and if there is no improvement the case will be escalated to Team around the School.

### **Reporting to Parents**

The school reports on pupil's attendance annually with the end of year school report.

Where the attendance is a cause for concern or below 90% parents and carers will be informed and invited to a meeting. An action plan will be put in place and the information will be shared with the local Authority. This may result in a penalty notice.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

#### **Approval for Term-Time Absence**

The Head teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head teacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Forces staff returning , or embarking on lengthy active service abroad
- Police and fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be the last chance to be together if the family member lives abroad
- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provisions.

If parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, they should complete a request for term time leave form at least 4 weeks before the anticipated leave date (forms are available from the school office) School will respond to the request within a week of receiving the form. If the Head teacher deems the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absence, a written reply will be sent to the parent/carer. If the Head teacher refuses your request and the pupil is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance.

## **Legal Sanctions**

The Education Act 1996 states that:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence and if in the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.

The school can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head teacher

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

As a school we understand how important both good attendance and punctuality is and promote this with all children, with weekly attendance certificates in Celebration Collective Worship.

We ask our families to:

- Contact the school to discuss concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Work with the school in partnership to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

The Education Welfare Officer monitors pupil's absences alongside the Head teacher and where an absence is connected to safeguarding case it will be shared with the designated Safeguard Lead.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Children Missing Education (CME) Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Somerset Child Missing Education process and make CME referral as appropriate.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

### Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance



<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day