



St Francis Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Standards Committee Approval
Ratified: March 2023
Review: March 2025

ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Francis School strives to provide a broad, balanced and relevant Catholic education in which we recognise, through mutual respect, that Christ is in everyone.

Statement

This School's Attendance Policy is set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters – School Attendance May 2022 and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance May 2022

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. The Education Act of 1996 states that a parent is responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

The Court has determined that "Regular" attendance means that which is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school" (Isle of Wight Council -v- Platt (6th April 2017) [Supreme Court] [2017] UKSC 28 (on appeal from [2016] EWHC 1283 (Admin)).

St. Francis Catholic Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Statement Aims

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance statement concerning required attendance and with regard to the authorised and unauthorised absences of its pupils. These details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance. The Governing Body has appointed the Safeguarding governor, Jason Elwel, to oversee attendance matters.

CONTENTS

1. Absence
2. School practice
3. Term time leave of absence
4. The role of school management
5. The role of the Education Welfare Service
6. Promoting good attendance
7. What parents can do to help
8. The role of the governing body

ABSENCE

This school expects its pupils to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there are good reasons for the absence and the absence is authorised. There are two main categories of absence:

- 1. Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification of the absence or given approval in advance for the absence.**

Authorisation for term time leave will not be given for the following reasons:

- Availability or cost.
- Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.
- Holidays during term time

- 2. Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or a child's absence has not been approved after a parent's request.**

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailment such as headache or cold is not acceptable. Repeated absence will require us to request that you obtain evidence from your doctor's surgery, such as a stamped appointment card or a prescription. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for this information and will not be liable for the cost.

SCHOOL PRACTICE

School starts at 8.50a.m. Registers are taken immediately; they are taken again at the start of the afternoon session.

- A child who arrives after the taking of the register is marked as late and the reason given and the number of minutes they are late are recorded.

- A child who arrives after the registers close at 9.20 a.m. is marked as absent in the register. - Parents/guardians should always telephone the school office on 01344 622840 or send an e-mail (office@stfrancisprimary.org) if their child is not attending school by 9am.
- The school office will telephone parents on the first morning of an absence if notification has not been received.
- A written explanation must be provided when the child returns to school.
- Registers are checked regularly and where there is an unexplained absence, a written request will be sent for an explanation.
- After three weeks, the absence will be marked as unauthorised if no reason is provided.
- Regular analysis of absenteeism will be carried out and letters/emails will be sent to parents if attendance falls below expected level (95%).
- If attendance does not improve, parents may be called in to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.
- If there is no improvement, parents may be called in to go through an attendance action plan with the Headteacher.
- Further absence may result in referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Lateness

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to school on time. A child arriving after registration i.e. after 8.50am is disruptive for the class and embarrassing for the child. Vital information is given at the start of the school day and the child's learning may be affected if he/she is not present for the full session. Punctuality is an important life skill. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service if it continues.

A pupil arriving late:

- Should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office.
- Will have their name entered in the late register with the reason for the late arrival.
- Will be sent to/taken to their classroom.

Parents are not permitted to take their child to the classroom as this disrupts teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed (9.20am), the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety requirements.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. You may be asked for proof of the appointment.

TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At St. Francis School we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure that your child achieves to their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

However, we recognise that there may be occasions where a parent considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Headteacher will decide if the circumstances are "exceptional" and thus whether or not the absence will be "authorised".

Parent Action

Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible, giving at least 2 weeks' notice.

The request, to be made by the parent with whom the child normally resides, must be made in writing using the "Request for Term Time Absence" form available from the school office. The parent may be advised to meet with the Headteacher to discuss application.

The request must include the reason why it is felt necessary to take leave during term time (the "exceptional" circumstances). Parents will be required to produce proof for reason for request, where possible.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to exceptional circumstances. Parent will be informed by letter/email within 5 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

School Action

On receipt, the Headteacher, or such person as duly authorised by the Headteacher to do so on their behalf, will consider the submitted application for leave of absence during term time and will take into account the/any reason as given by the parent for seeking such leave of absence ahead of deciding whether or not such given reasons are, in their view, "exceptional" to merit the granting such leave of absence during term time.

The parent who submitted the application for leave of absence during term time will be notified by the school by letter and within 5 working days of the school's decision in response to the application.

Term time absence taken without authorisation may, where the criteria for doing so is met, may be referred by the School to the Educational Welfare Service.

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which every child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 75 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. Parents should ensure that family holidays are taken during school holiday periods only.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school, and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures. We expect that as soon a child starts their education at St. Francis Catholic School, parents will abide by our attendance statement.

The staff at St. Francis Catholic School has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences. There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher.

The school may send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness or any other concerns. Attendance is shared during Parent Consultation Evenings

The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on absences.

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE (EWO)

The Education Welfare Service strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence".

When a pupil is referred to the Education Welfare Service because of persistent poor attendance there are various actions that can be taken to try to bring about an improvement. The Fast Track Intervention framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent in specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 8 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings may be initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our school, by the following actions:

- Certificates are awarded to individual children who excel in attendance – 98 Club

- In our weekly newsletter we celebrate classes where there is high attendance and compare our school to national average.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the school's attendance statement as this has a huge impact on a pupils learning.

Parents must:

- not condone your child's absences.
- telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness.
- send copy of appointment card/letter for medical appointments or school visits
- avoid appointments during the school day

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Policy to be reviewed every three years or in accordance with any new legislation.
(Attendance procedures to be reviewed annually by Headteacher in conjunction with the School Office)

Policy to be the responsibility of the Standards Committee

**ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE**

**The school does not authorise term time absences unless there are exceptional circumstances.
(Requests for term time absence should be made 14 days before the start date.)**

Surname:	Forename:	Class:
Reason For Absence:		
Start date:	End date:	No. of School Days:

Please note:

1. Absence requests will be considered in relation to the student's attendance.
2. Term time absences are not an automatic right.
3. Absences will not be permitted during preparation time for or dates of exams or tests – these are dates available from the school.
4. Absences not agreed will be deemed as UNAUTHORISED and so noted in the student's school record.
5. UNAUTHORISED absences may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer to be considered for a Fixed Penalty Notice or other action.
6. If a student fails to return by the agreed date, the Education Welfare Officer may be informed. In extreme cases a student may be removed from the school roll in accordance with the DCSF Guidance on Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006. Parents/carers will need to re-apply for a place via the Local Authority Admissions Team.

I have read and understand the information above. Signed: Please Print Name:	Parent/Carer (Please delete as necessary) Date:
For Office Use:	Attendance %
Previous Term Time Absence this Academic Year: Y/N	If Yes, number of days:

**ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE**

Surname:	Forename:	Class:
Having considered your application very carefully, the request for term time absence: <input type="checkbox"/> Has been agreed and authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Has not been agreed and will be noted as unauthorised.		
Signed: HEADTEACHER		Date: