



SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023-2024

School Attendance Lead	Mr Rodrigo Assistant Headteacher
Attendance Officer	Bernie Kelly Admin Officer
Safeguarding Governor (responsible for attendance)	Teresa Nunn Chair of Governors

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Mission Statement

To go forward together in Christ

To respect our neighbour

To always give our best

AIM

The aim of Sacred Heart Catholic School attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to and that all children are given the opportunity to attend school everyday on time.

Sacred Heart Catholic School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be.

We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusion policy.

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age-

Children are entitled to and must receive a primary school education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the academic year they turn 11 years old.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year-

- a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- b) if they attain the age on that day, or
- c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

Sacred Heart Catholic School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by legal framework and the guidance produced by the Department for Education: *Working together to improve school attendance* this Attendance Policy has been produced accordingly.

2. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 GOVERNING BODY

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff.
- Annually review the attendance policy and ensure provisions are in place to allow staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the Governing Body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

2.2 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the schools teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the Governing Body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;

- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
- Report to the Governing Body each term and the Chair of Governors for attendance termly on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

2.3 TEACHERS and SUPPORT STAFF

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teacher's and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the schools teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

2.4 PARENTS and CARERS

As part of the whole school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education - support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section 4), and include an expected date of return;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. So that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital

that the child receives the same message at home as they do at the school about the importance of attendance.

- Do not take their children out of school during term time. Parents/carers are required to make a special request for this in advance to the Head teacher. If this is not possible such as a bereavement, the school must be notified at the earliest opportunity. In the event that leave is taken without a request being made in advance, the Head teacher cannot retrospectively authorise the absence.
- Ensure that they follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

2.5 PUPILS

As part of the whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen;
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see section 4.9). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their class teachers. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation;

3. CATEGORIES of ABSENCE and PROCEDURE for REPORTING

ABSENCES

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear when taking the register whether a pupil's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone (leave a message on the answering machine facility if no answer) on the first day of absence and let them know when (what date) they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, 3 days or more, a note must be provided on the first day the pupil returns following an absence.

3.1 ILLNESS

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parent/carer explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

3.2 MEDICAL or DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure that these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible. Evidence of this appointment must be submitted to the office.

3.3 AUTHORISED ABSENCES

There may be instances where the school will authorise absences such as for a family bereavement.

3.4 SUSPENSION

Suspension is treated as an authorised absence. The school will arrange for work to be sent home.

3.5 FAMILY HOLIDAYS and EXTENDED LEAVE

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of term time. Parents/carers do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason. Requests for leave from school must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence.

All requests submitted to the head will be responded to in writing, and will outline details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents /carers should contact the school immediately if there is any cause for delay in the child's return.

When deciding whether to authorise the absence, the head will take the following into account:

Past & current attendance history

Previous holiday requests/taken

If permission is not granted, but the child is removed from school, the absence will be unauthorised and parents/ carers may be issued with a penalty notice by the Local Authority. penalty notices are per parent, per child.

3.6 RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Sacred Heart School recognises that there are times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall within term time, and will allow one day absence authorised for these times.

Parents/ carers will be aware that written notification should be given in advance.

3.7 LATE ARRIVAL

Registration is between 8.45 and 9:00am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. The registration period ends at 9.30am. Pupils who arrive after this time must sign in at reception and give a reason for lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at reception to ensure that all health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils on site are accounted for.

Persistent late arrivals may result in disciplinary action.

4. SCHOOL ACTION: follow up absences

Class registers are electronically passed to the office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained absences the school will contact the parent/carer to ascertain reason for absence and if necessary any support the school can offer to enable the child to attend school.

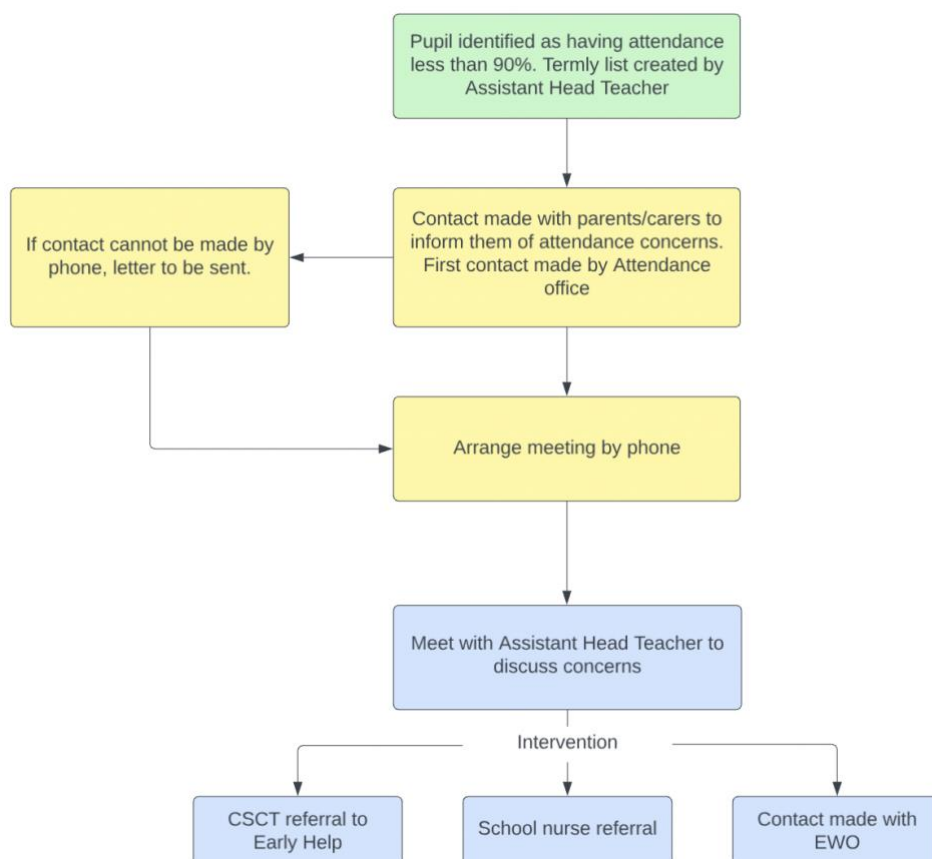
5. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND RESPONDING TO PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

The School operates a first day calling procedure. The parents/carers of pupils absent from School without prior explanation will be contacted on the first day of their absence.

How School staff will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges:

- The school is responsible for initial interventions. When a pattern of poor attendance emerges, a discussion is needed between the parent and school management to determine a course of action.
- Although all cases are considered individually, Mr Rodrigo, Assistant Head Teacher, will generally become involved when a pupil's attendance falls below 90% in one term.

If the issues persist, the school will take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners



Signed by:

Chair of Governors

Date

Head Teacher

Date