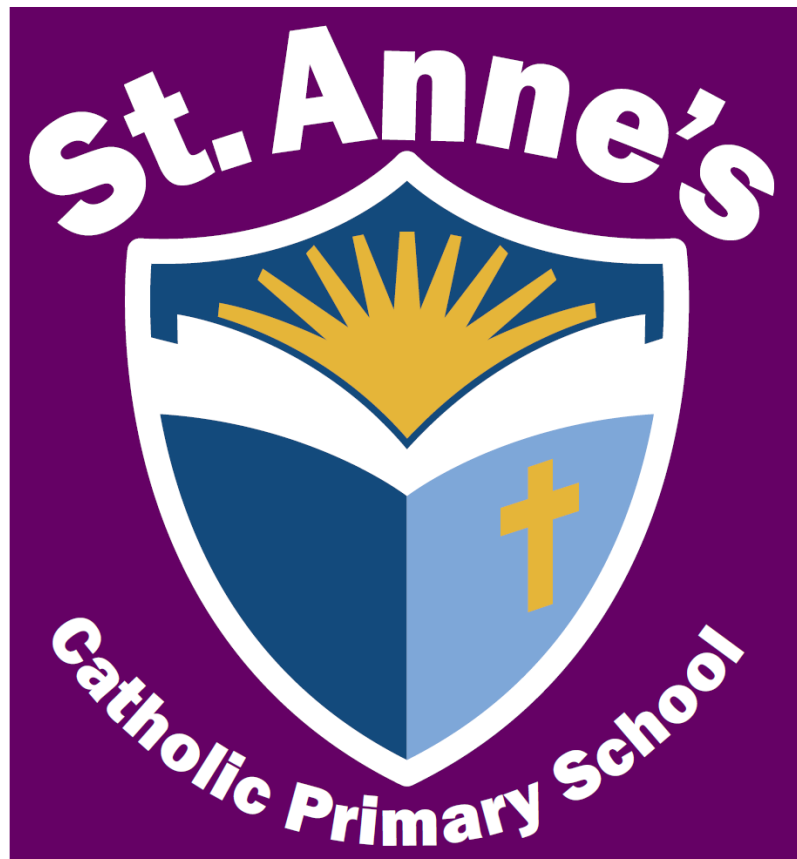


# Attendance Policy



Reviewed: January 2022  
Next Review Date: January 2024

## **Covid 19**

As school is following all latest Government advice and guidance relating to attendance during Covid-19, this policy is subject to change.

### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. To this end, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all that we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To achieve this, we strive to make our school a happy, caring and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill-health, are prevented from coming to school.

### **Non- Attendance**

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, we recognise that each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate to all cases. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school informed of any matters which may affect their child's attendance.

The school will keep parents / carers aware of their children's attendance and any associated concerns on a regular basis.

### **What does good attendance look like?**

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

97%+	Excellent attendance. A level which will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school.
95 – 96%	Average attendance. A level in-line with national averages.
90 – 94%	Poor attendance. Absence is now affecting attainment and progress and the school will seek to liaise with parents / carers to improve their child's attendance levels
Below 90%	This results in a Persistent Absence and is unacceptable. Absence IS causing serious concern and IS affecting attainment and progress. The school and attendance team at Cardinal Hume will seek to work with the parents / carers to improve the situation.

### **Arrival and Registration**

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

School registers are taken twice daily. A day counts as 2 attendances. All children are able to enter the school at 8.40 a.m. and are expected to be in class by 8.50 a.m. for the morning session. Morning registration ends at 9.00 a.m. Any child who arrives after this time will be marked as late. After 9.30 a.m., this will become an Unauthorised Absence, unless medical evidence has been provided.

The afternoon registers are taken at 1.00 p.m. and will close at 1.10 p.m.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving with a parent / carer outside normal hours are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency and a fire drill.

### **Illness and Medical Appointments**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should return to school directly after the appointment should the school day not have ended.

The school office should be informed before 9.15am on the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

For an absence of more than three days the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.

Medical certificates may be required if an absence is greater than five days or overall attendance is unacceptable.

### **Recording of Absences**

#### ***Authorised absence***

- An absence is classed as authorised when a child has been away for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the school has received telephone or written explanation of the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absence supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

#### ***Unauthorised absence***

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head Teacher and whether the school has not been informed why a child is absent.

#### **If a child is absent**

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact the parent / carer of the child by 9.30 a.m. if no message has been received prior to this regarding the reason for the absence. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent / carer in order to check the safety of the child.

### **Leave of Absence**

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. Due to recent amendments (April 2013) that have been made to the Department for Education's Pupil Registration Regulations to address attendance issues, it has been made clear to Head Teachers that they should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are "**exceptional circumstances**". The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. It is a common misconception that pupils are allowed to take up to ten days holiday in term time during any academic year. ***Family holidays are generally not considered an exceptional circumstance.***

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact. As much notice as possible should be given. The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, the expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date

covered by the request. If the request for a leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against you.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results.

### **Lateness**

The importance of punctuality is also stressed as repeated lateness impacts not only on the learning of the individual but can affect the learning of the class as a whole. With this in mind, parents / carers of children who are identified as attaining frequent lateness will also be contacted by the school and targets for improvement set. If these improvements are not made, a referral onto the Fast Track Programme will be initiated.

### **Attendance Procedure**

LOC1	Letter	This letter will be issued if attendance is lower than expected or if the school has concerns.
LOC2	Letter	This letter will be issued to inform parents that the school will not authorise any more absence until medical evidence is provided.
LOC3	Formal Meeting	A phone call will be made to invite parents to school for a meeting to discuss concerns about attendance and see whether the school can offer any support.
Referral	Attendance Team	A letter will be issued to inform parents that their child is being referred to the Attendance Team at Cardinal Hume and if necessary, may be placed on the Fast Track Programme.

### **Fast Track Programme**

St Anne's work closely with Cardinal Hume Catholic School to help improve attendance throughout the school. Fast Track promotes early intervention to ensure that attendance and punctuality issues are dealt with effectively to help your child attend school both regularly and punctually. It involves pupils, their parents and the school.

Week 1	The fast Track process begins and home visits/appointments take place if requested by parents/carers.
Week 3	Formal interview. If the child's attendance is still of concern, parents/carers will be invited to attend a formal meeting in school.
Week 6	Final warning letter. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance a final warning letter will be issued.
Week 9	Final review. If the child's attendance is satisfactory, no formal action will be taken and the usual school monitoring procedures will continue. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance parents/carers may be referred to the local authority's Legal Intervention Team. This can result in the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution in the magistrates' court.

### **Long Term Absence**

When children have an absence which means that they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up their school work.

### **Repeated Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absences remain on a child's record. Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, parents / carers will be placed on the fast track programme. The LA has the right to take legal action against any parents / carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

All of the children who have 100% attendance in any half-term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in assembly. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year which will be awarded in the final assembly of the summer term.

### **Attendance Targets**

The Education (School Attendance Targets) Regulations 2007 requires governing bodies to set overall attendance targets. Under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006, governing bodies are also required to provide information requested by The Secretary of State, including absence data that will be collected every term through the school census.

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the Head Teacher and the Governing Body at an annual target setting meeting. The Head Teacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body. St Anne's yearly attendance expectation is 95%, with a target of 96%.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. Class teachers will be responsible for maintaining accurate class registers and monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the lead-teacher for attendance.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.