



# St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School

*Walking together in the light of the Lord*

## Attendance Policy

Date approved: April 2018

Frequency of review: Every 2 years

Review date: April 2020

Author: N Rolph

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School aims to encourage children, parents and carers to achieve the best possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them. Our school offers an environment in which children feel welcomed and valued. Through the ethos of our school children will be aware that their presence in school is important and they will be missed if they are absent or late.

### **Aims**

To raise pupil achievement by:

- Ensuring our children attend school at least 97% of the time
- Reducing unauthorised absence
- Maintaining high standards of punctuality
- Supporting parents in ensuring their children maintain good attendance through clarifying expectations and developing positive working relationships with them
- Consistently evaluating our measure for promoting and maintaining good attendance

### **Implementation**

Registration Procedures

1. Registers will be called twice daily, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions (*and teachers will take responsibility for the accuracy of their registers*)
2. Morning registers will be completed between 8.55am and 9:10am, when registers will close
3. Pupils arriving after this time must enter via the School Office, with a parent or carer, where this information will be recorded. Late arrivals after this time, without a valid reason, are recorded as unauthorised.

## Absence Procedures

First day contact is central to the school's attendance policy in order to emphasise the importance of school attendance and to deal with attendance issues at an early stage.

1. Parents or carers should ring the school on the first morning of an absence to report it - there is an answerphone for messages if the office is unmanned. The reason for absence should be as specific as possible (i.e. headache, eye infection etc. rather than sick or unwell).
2. If there is no contact or explanation on the first day of absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone.
3. An absence will be considered as authorised if parents or carers provide an acceptable explanation by telephone, letter, email or verbal message.
4. Unsuccessful attempts to contact the home will be recorded and may prompt in some cases a home visit from the Family Support Worker. Should we still be unable to determine the whereabouts and safety of a child, we will contact the police.
5. If there is no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised after one month. Lateness, authorised and unauthorised absences are recorded on the pupil's end of year report. Unauthorised absences will also lead to a parent contract meeting, should your child's attendance fall below 96%. (Please see information below)

## Authorised Absences

Only the school can authorise an absence. It is up to the school to decide if the explanation offered is a valid reason for absence or not. Obtaining clear and precise reasons for absence is an important part of identifying Child Protection concerns and in ensuring we offer you and your child the most effective support.

Acceptable reasons for absences include:-

1. Genuine illness
2. Medical/ dental appointments made by professional services. Please note that proof of appointment may be requested.
3. Days of religious observance
4. Exceptional circumstances such as a death in the family
5. Holidays in term time as authorised by the Headteacher (please see below)

Unacceptable reasons for absence include:-

1. Truancy
2. Shopping trips
3. Birthday treats
4. When no reason has been given within a month of the date of absence

### Family Holidays taken during Term Time

Since September 2013, government legislation states that holidays in term time can only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**. While it is up to the Headteacher how many days your child can be away from school, if leave is granted, we are unable to authorise any absence which would take your child's attendance below 95%.

Parents and carers are, therefore, **strongly** urged to avoid booking a holiday during term time. Requests for such must be made in writing. Parents and carers may be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to review past attendance, the reason for the holiday and school performance before any leave of absence is granted. The school may choose to authorise up to 10 days.

You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher of the school. An initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. So a two parent family with two children would be fined £240. For more information see '[Penalty notices for non-school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance)'. Or <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt his/her learning. Not only do children miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. This may lead to the pupil's underachievement.

The Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team work with all local education providers to improve the attendance of children and young people.

## **Monitoring**

### Lateness

Arriving late to school on a regular basis can significantly impact on a pupil's learning; being the focus of attention entering a settled classroom or assembly hall, missing the instructions for the day or the lesson, having to struggle to catch up with the class routine are all factors in reducing a child's potential for learning and harming their self-esteem.

Registers are monitored every term:

- To pick up patterns of absence
- To pick up patterns of lateness
- To ensure procedures are followed
- To monitor the major causes of unauthorised absence
- To monitor the percentages of authorised and unauthorised attendance

- To ensure the safety of all children

Where there is persistent non-attendance without reasonable explanation, the parent or carer will be invited to discuss the school's concerns over that individual child.

Where there is persistent absence that is authorised through sickness and that absence is affecting the child's progress, the school will invite the parents or carers to school to discuss what support can be offered. The school will investigate the pupil's circumstances within school to identify any school based issues which may be affecting the child's attendance.

The DfE defines persistent absentees as school-age pupils missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year.

- Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only three per cent manage to achieve successful GCSE results
- Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent manage to achieve successful GCSE results
- Of pupils who miss less than five per cent of school, 73 per cent achieve successful GCSE results

Where persistent absences have been monitored and no improvements have been made the school **will** refer the pupil to the Education Entitlement Service for further advice, investigations and prosecution where appropriate.

### **Attendance Procedures**

Children with attendance below 97% will receive a letter reminding parents of our expectations

Children with attendance below 95% will receive a letter inviting them to a meeting to discuss and develop a support plan to improve their attendance. This will be monitored over 6 weeks against an agreed attendance target

Should this target be reached, no further action will be taken, other than usual whole school monitoring

However, if the target is not reached, a further monitoring period of 6 weeks will be initiated. Failure to fulfil the expectations of this monitoring period will lead to a Parent Contract Meeting with the Headteacher. The terms of this contract will be made clear and monitored closely. Failure to comply with these terms will lead to a penalty Notice being issued by Northampton County Council, along with a fine.

### **Unauthorised term time leave of absence**

Following an unauthorised leave of absence, a parent will receive a letter advising them that the leave requested has not been agreed and will be marked as unauthorised.

A referral will be made to the Education Inclusion Partnership Team, which may lead to a penalty notice being issued. If this is the case, a fine will be issued by Northampton County Council and they will become responsible for its payment.

### **Parent Contracts**

A **parenting contract** is a formal, signed agreement between a parent and the school's governing body. It's designed to tackle the causes of an individual child missing school.

Under the contract, the parent agrees to make sure their child attends school regularly over a specific period – and the governing body agrees to provide specific support, e.g. helping the parent with strategies to encourage improved attendance and punctuality.

You can't be forced to enter into a parenting contract. But if you're offered one and refuse, it can be used as evidence against you if you're prosecuted at a later date.

## **Responsibilities**

### Pupils

To attend school regularly for the full 190 days of the school year  
To arrive on time

### Parents

To ensure their children attend school regularly for the full 190 days of the school year  
To ensure their children arrive on time and are picked up at the end of the school day  
To contact the school on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend and to provide a note or telephone call to explain the absence if they wish the absence to be considered for authorisation  
To make medical and dental appointments outside school hours, providing an appointment card from the medical practice where this is not possible  
To support the school aim of raising achievement through full attendance  
To contact the school if worried about a pupil's attendance  
To engage with school support to ensure the best outcomes for their child

### School

To keep accurate registers  
To contact parents or carers on the first day of absence if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation  
To have in place clear procedures to support staff on attendance issues  
To make parents or carers aware of their attendance responsibilities  
To regularly review registration and attendance procedures  
To promote and celebrate good attendance (including significant improvement) through stickers, certificates, reports etc.  
To have regard for equal opportunities, access, disability and EAL issues where they impinge on attendance and punctuality

### Governors and Trust Directors

To ensure that an Admissions register is kept  
To ensure that an Attendance register is kept  
To monitor attendance levels for all children and groups of children  
To monitor persistent absences and review case studies, where appropriate  
To monitor the effectiveness of the strategies put in place by the Headteacher to ensure good attendance

You can find further information and guidance relating to attendance on the following <http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/attendance-and-behaviour-support-for-parents.aspx>

Indications of success

Attendance at St Gregory's is above 96%

Persistent absence figures are below national figures

Policy adopted by Local School Committee.....

Signed..... (Chair)

To be reviewed.....