

# **Attendance Policy 2016 ~ 2017**



This policy was adopted at the meeting of the Academy Committee of Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School held on 6 October 2016.

## **Introduction**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At our school, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## **1 Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy**

**1.1** Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**1.2** Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure 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.

**1.3** There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in Coventry are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.

**1.4** Further guidance can be found in the Exceptional Leave section of this policy.

**1.5** Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, which is currently £60 per parent per child, to be paid within 21 days (the fine doubles to £120 per parent per child after 21 days). After 28 days the matter is referred to the Local Authority for non-payment and can result in court action being taken.



## **2 What is the difference between Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?**

### **2.1 Authorised absence**

**2.1.1** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school daily to explain the absence. You can contact school by 9.00am on the morning of the absence by telephoning **02476 617231, Extension 274**. Alternatively, use our **Text-in Service on 07860 005117** stating child's name, year group/tutor group and reason for absence. This number is for notification of absence only and therefore a response service is not available, for other enquires please refer to the main number.

**2.1.2** Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours or if a child is absent for their birthday, this will not make it an authorised absence.

**2.1.3** Your child's attendance is monitored on a regular basis by staff in school. If your child has regular periods of absence or their attendance falls below a certain level, the school may notify you that in future, absences will only be authorised where medical evidence is provided. The School's Attendance Officer may also be asked to contact you on the schools behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.

**2.1.4** Wherever possible, the school would expect medical appointments to be arranged out of school hours. Where this is not possible, an appointment card / letter will need to be provided in order for the session to be authorised. Your child is expected to attend before and / or after the appointment when possible.

### **2.2 Unauthorised absence**

**2.2.1** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

**2.2.2** Absences will be unauthorised where no contact is made by parents to explain why their child is absent each day. Absences will also be unauthorised where medical evidence has been requested and has not been provided by parents.

**2.2.3** The School's Attendance Officer may be asked to contact you on the schools behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.



### 3 Procedures

#### 3.1 Registration

3.1.1 At our school the school pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55am.

3.1.2 If a child is not present when the register is taken they are marked absent. If a child arrives at school later than 8.55am they are given a **late after registration closes** mark. Office or teaching staff will record the number of minutes late on SIMS (School Information Management System).

**3.1.3** At 9.20am the registers will be closed and the morning session will be unauthorised.

3.1.4 If a child repeatedly arrives late for registration they will lose their privilege time on a Wednesday and will be expected to stay in school until 3.20pm or be kept in a detention. You will be informed of this by text.

3.1.5 If a child is persistently late parents will be asked to meet with the APCC, the Attendance Officer, Progress Leader and/or Deputy Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. Parents will be contacted and maybe offered a CAF to support their child's attendance.

#### 3.2 Written notification of absence

3.2.1 Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, a note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

#### 3.3 If a child is absent without notification

3.3.1 Where no notification has been received by school, a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the school's messaging service.

3.3.2 If there is no response to the message, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

#### 3.4 Missing children

3.4.1 If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

3.4.2 The school's Attendance Officer will complete the relevant Missing Child paperwork and notify the Local Authority's Children and Families First Service, or Social Care.



## 4 Requests for exceptional leave of absence during term time

**4.1** Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in very exceptional and unavoidable circumstances that present themselves at short notice.

**4.2** Except in an emergency, permission for any period of leave must be sought from the school at least 2 weeks before it is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements.

**4.3** Any request must be made on an Exceptional Leave of Absence Form, which can be obtained from the school office. A copy of this form can be found on page 8 of this document and returned to the Interim Principal, Miss Angela Whelan.

**4.4** Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.

**4.5** Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the head teacher on behalf of Governors. Where necessary, a meeting will be arranged between parents and the head teacher to discuss the application.

**4.6** Absence for the purpose of a family holiday does not constitute exceptional leave. Where the school suspects that a child is absent due to a holiday, steps will be taken to investigate further. This may involve a home visit during the absence period with a view to having direct contact with you and your child. Parents will also be required to produce evidence (for instance medical evidence) in support of the period of absence in order to avoid the issue of a Penalty Notice and / or prosecution

**4.7** If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practising or affected community, then the Safeguarding Lead will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer and use direct questioning to ascertain whether 'cutting' of the girl will be undertaken during the leave of absence. The Safeguarding Lead will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to local Referral and Assessment Services or Police

## 5 Holidays during term time

**5.1** Taking holidays during term time will affect your child's learning and we expect parents to help us by taking holidays during official school closure periods.

**5.2** There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. In fact the Local Authority states in its Holidays in Term Time Procedures and Guidance document that **head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

**5.3** If you are planning on taking leave for any purpose during term time, you must notify the school in advance, completing the Exceptional Leave of Absence Form available from the school office. On receipt of this, the head teacher will consider the request and decide whether the leave of absence will



be granted (i.e. whether it constitutes exceptional and unavoidable leave).

Please note that your child's current level of attendance will be analysed when considering your request. You will be informed of the outcome of your request by letter. A meeting with the head teacher may be arranged if further discussion is required.

**5.4** If you take your child on holiday during term time, or where your request for leave has not been granted, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised holiday. This will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, which is currently £60 per parent per child, to be paid within 21 days (the fine doubles to £120 per parent per child after 21 days). After 28 days the matter is referred to the Local Authority for non-payment and can result in court action being taken.

**5.5** Where the school suspects that a child is absent due to a holiday, steps will be taken to investigate further. This may involve a home visit during the absence period with a view to having direct contact with you and your child. Parents will also be required to produce evidence (for instance medical evidence) in support of the period of absence in order to avoid the issue of a Penalty Notice and / or prosecution.

## **6 Long-term absence through accident or illness**

**6.1** If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **7 Monitoring**

**7.1** The APCCs and School's Attendance Officer (Michelle Andrews) monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis and will issue letters, make telephone calls, arrange school meetings or undertake home visits where necessary to address levels of absence observed.

**7.2** The rates of attendance will be reported in the head teacher's report at each full governor's meeting.

## **8 Repeated unauthorised absences**

**8.1** If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. In some circumstances a home visit will be undertaken by members of school staff to discuss this with you. The Schools' Attendance Officer may be asked to contact you on the schools behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.



**8.2** If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Children and Families First Service, who may visit the home and seek to investigate further and provide any necessary support. The Children and Families First Service also have the authority to pursue legal action against parents of children with poor attendance where steps are not taken to address this.

## **9 Rewards for good attendance**

**9.1** Half-termly rewards for 100% attendance and no lates awarded in House Assemblies.

**9.2** Prizes for continuous good attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

**9.3** Weekly recognition through Year Assembly by tutor group.

**9.4** Attendance Trophy for the best tutor group attendance per half term.

## **10 Review**

**10.1** The policy will be reviewed by the Governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Next Review Date: October 2017**



## APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This application must be submitted to the head teacher at least 2 weeks (where possible) before the proposed period of exceptional leave. In case of emergency, this form must be completed beforehand, as far in advance as possible.

As recommended by the Local Authority, the school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to **ALL** the children of the school community. A copy of this and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the school office and from the school's website.

<b>Name of child</b>		<b>Form:</b>
<b>Proposed date(s) of absence</b>	<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
<b>Siblings at other schools</b>	<b>Name &amp; DOB of child(ren)</b>	<b>Name of school</b>
<b>Reason for proposed absence (please continue on the reverse of this sheet if necessary)</b>		
<b>Signature of parent/guardian</b>	<b>Name of parent/guardian</b>	<b>Date of request</b>

Your application will be considered by the Head teacher. There may be circumstances where a meeting will be arranged for you to discuss your application with the head teacher. Evidence of travel bookings may be required. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

**If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. Similarly, if you child fails to return on the agreed date, the same may apply. If your child is absent for a prolonged period without agreement, your child can lose their school place and will be removed from roll.**

For official use only:		
Action	Initials	Date
Seen by Head teacher		
Head teacher's comments (e.g. in support or on attendance record)		
Evidence provided by the parent to support the request		







**CARDINAL WISEMAN**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL