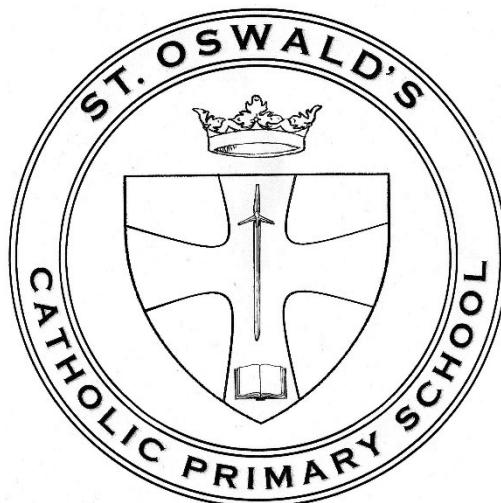


St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2021-2022

Approved by:	Approval date	Renewal date
Standards committee	07/10/21	September 2023

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy is set within the context of the whole school aims and mission statement:



*Together with Jesus,
We will Learn and Grow in Faith*

Introduction

All pupils are expected to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly. Parents/ carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives a full-time education and attends school on a regular basis. Regular attendance is crucial for social development and for children to fulfil their academic potential. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can jeopardize development of life skills necessary for the world of work and adult life. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less both in primary and secondary school. Schools should encourage and highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

In this school attendance of 97% or more is recognised as good attendance.

In September 2015 the government made several key changes to school attendance. One of the most significant changes was to ‘Persistent Absenteeism’ now any child whose attendance falls below 90% is considered persistently absent and will be closely monitored, and may result in education welfare (EWO) involvement.

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children receive their full entitlement to education and attend school regularly and punctually.

School Responsibility

- See Appendix 1 for attendance policy stages
- See Appendix 2 for school daily absence procedures with regards to detailed guidelines.
- To follow the agreed school systems and protocols consistently.
- To encourage and highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To prioritise cases where a pupil reaches or is in danger of reaching ‘Persistent Absentee’ status (i.e. missing 10% or more attendance).
- Celebrate and reward good attendance both individually and by displaying achievements.
- Keep an attendance register, as required by law, to be taken at the start of the first session of the day and once during the second (afternoon) session.

- Use the appropriate registration codes and record them electronically. Monitor and reduce absence; acting early to reduce patterns of absence.
- Follow-up any absences to ascertain the reason and identify whether they are approved or not.
- If necessary, the family liaison officer (FLO) will carry out a home visit to ascertain further information and offer the family support.
- Inform parents/carers of details of their child's attendance and absence in school reports.
- Liaise regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and report any concerns. The EWO may contact or visit parent/carers if necessary to ensure support is given to the family.
- All holidays except in exceptional circumstances will be unauthorised and fines will be issued.
- Inform parents that request for leave of absence to return to the country of origin will mean that school have to see flight or travel details, address where child will be staying and return date with arrangements. The children must return on the agreed date otherwise they may lose their place and CME protocols will be initiated.
- To ensure lateness is recorded on the school Inventory System.
- To monitor punctuality and identifying issues or concerns.
- Invite parents in to discuss any issues or concerns.
- Child missing in education (CME) will be reviewed weekly as part of our regular attendance meetings with the EWO and team. For any children identified as being CME the appropriate paperwork will be completed and the local authority informed.

Parent Responsibility

- Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child receives full-time education and attends school on a regular basis.
- To ensure child/children arrive to school on time avoiding unnecessary lateness.
- If a child is absent on any occasion, parents/carers are expected to contact the school and provide an explanation.
- To provide medical evidence to support all absences if your child is deemed persistently absent i.e. falls below 90% attendance.
- An 'authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence.
- If an explanation for the absence is not provided, or felt to be inappropriate, it will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.
- For all absences parents/carers are required to ring/ text school on the first morning of absence and to provide a letter of explanation when their child returns.
- Where possible, medical or dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours. However, if unavoidable, expected absence due to a medical or dental

appointments should be reported to school at the earliest opportunity, please note children should return to school after appointments.

- Parents should recognise that it may be damaging to their child's education if holidays are taken during term-time, any pupil's absence can disrupt teaching routines. The law says that parents/carers *do not have the right* to take their child out of school for a holiday during term-time. Taking a holiday in term-time is discouraged. An application for a holiday must be made in advance in writing and will only be considered by the Head Teacher in the exceptional circumstances below:-

"For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education"
Evidence would have to be provided from parents employers to back up these requests.

The Head Teacher has the final decision whether any requests meet the criteria outlined above. If a child is taken away from school without permission the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' and may result in a fixed penalty holiday fine being issued.

School Systems and Protocols:

- Registers are checked on a daily basis. Children who are absent are identified daily and the schools' record system is cross referenced for any messages.
- Initial contact is made with the parent requesting them to confirm reasons for absence.
- FLO's report attendance issues and concerns daily / weekly on an individual needs basis to the Deputy Head Teacher.
- Deputy Head may then proceed to parent interview or EWO.
- School follows a variety of strategies to support whole school attendance including:
 - Weekly class rewards of additional break for 100% attendance.
 - School attendance display and 'Percentage means Pounds' piggy bank for each class.
 - Termly class rewards of monetary value linked to piggy bank
 - Individual termly certificates for 100% attendance
 - Individual termly traffic light letters
 - When necessary letters are sent requesting medical evidence for all absences for children who are classed as persistently absent.
- Weekly, Attendance lead and/or Deputy meet with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and discuss particular concerns. Actions and ways forward are agreed following policy stages

Governor Responsibility

The governing body of the school has a responsibility to monitor attendance and punctuality. They will request termly reports from the Head Teacher.

The governors have set this policy and have overall responsibility for it. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix 1

Attendance Policy Stages

2021-22

Stage 1 – Issue identified with attendance and a letter sent out initially.

Stage 2 – If necessary a meeting with Family liaison officer/ appropriate Deputy Head Teacher to provide support and identify suitable ways forward.

Stage 3 – If no improvements a further letter is sent out by EWO to highlight potential attendance concerns.

Stage 4 – Meeting with EWO regarding next steps and support systems.

Stage 5 – If attendance is still a concern and a child has had more than 10 sessions absent a Fixed Penalty Warning will be issued.

Stage 6 – If still no improvement or engagement court action will be initiated.

Depending on the level of attendance, stages may be skipped and advanced to more formal stages (stages 5 and 6).

Appendix 2

Daily Absence Procedures

2021-2022

Staff should ensure registers are closed by 9.15am, marking only those children that are present at that time.

Children arriving late for school will be recorded onto registers by office staff.

1. After registers are completed, Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) collate a record of absent children.
2. Office staff to code I or M on SIMS following telephone messages, including a comment explaining the reason for absence.
3. FLO's to complete class checks of N children and amend if necessary.
4. Phone call will be made by FLO's or office staff for any children who are absent on the first day.
5. If no contact has been established by the second day, a further telephone call will be made until a reason for absence has been received and information about a possible return date.
6. On the third day if still no contact has been made a home visit will be carried out by FLO.
7. If no contact has still not been possible at this point, FLO will inform a Deputy Head who will begin an EWO referral. At this point, the EWO will take over attempts to contact family. In addition, school will continue daily attempts to contact the child's family.
8. After reports from EWO of lack of progress for 10 days, the local authority will be informed of a child missing education; CME safeguarding team will initiate procedures.
9. Text messages will be sent daily to ALL families of absent children until they return to school, this is to maintain contact with family.

Please note:

- Children on our PA list may supersede all these procedures, depending on circumstances, and a home visit will be made. Occasionally, an immediate EWO referral will be made following discussion with the attendance team.
- Holidays/holiday codes can only be authorised by the Deputy Head teachers according to the school policy. FLO's or office staff will amend codes accordingly following a discussion with the Deputy.
- The use of any codes other than I and M should always be agreed with Deputy Head.

Appendix 3

Coronavirus Attendance

Policy Addendum

2021-2022

This document does not replace our existing **Attendance Policy** which can be found on our website at <https://stoswaldsschool.com/>, but it outlines our attendance procedures for the period of school re-opening from September 2021.

**Please refer to DfE guidance at the end of this document for information on vulnerability, shielding and quarantine requirements*

Background

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the Government made amendments to the legislation which meant, parents would not be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

It is now vital for **all children** to return to school to minimise the long-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

School Attendance was compulsory from the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 2020.

Usual rules on **School Attendance** still apply,

- It is the duty of the parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly (where the child is a registered pupil) and is of compulsory school age
- It is the responsibility of the school to record attendance and follow up absence.
- The availability of the local authority to issue sanctions relating to unauthorised absence from school will now continue.

Who cannot attend school?

- **Pupils who have Covid symptoms.**

Where this is the case, please refer to the NHS testing website and inform the school immediately.

If someone in your household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the school will discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. However:

- A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves.
- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)

- Where you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK or travelling abroad and have been told to remain at home, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with the school and provide documentary evidence in support of the absence; school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform our decision to authorise absence or not. Current advice on [**travel corridors**](#).
- If rates of the virus rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore, they may be temporarily absent.
- Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to. You can find more advice from the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health at [**COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people**](#).

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources. We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with Education Health Care Plans.

Where pupils are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

All other pupils must attend school.

Pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been **authorised** for example;

- The pupil has been granted a leave of absence
- The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness
- The pupil is absent for a necessary religious observance etc

We understand that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such. This may also include some pupils with EHCP plans.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, please discuss your concerns with the school so that we can understand your situation and reassure you of the measures we have in place to reduce the risk in school. The school may contact the SEND and School Nursing Teams for advice and support, and we may require medical verification or other relevant documentation in order to assess risk.

Absence Procedures

- **Parents and carers should notify the school as normal** if your child is unable to attend on any given day. You must update the school regularly regarding any ongoing absence.
- Where a child is not regularly attending school, we will discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. Normal absence procedures will be followed (please refer to our main Attendance Policy found on our website at <https://stoswaldsschool.com/>)
- Where the school's efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or punctuality, and if there is no valid reason for the child to be absent, we will refer to the local

authority Education Welfare Service for additional support, advice and statutory intervention.

Procedures for COVID related absence.

If a parent reports a pupil absence due to COVID symptoms they should stay at home, be advised to get a test immediately and engage with NHS test and trace process. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

- **Code X** to be applied during the period of self-isolation until the outcome of the test is known.
- **Parents must inform school immediately of the results of a test:**
 - If a pupil tests negative, they should return to school the following day if they are well.
 - If the child tests positive they should follow the ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’ and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. (This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone) The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.
 - **Code X** should be used for the period of self-isolation until the outcome of the test is known. If a positive result is confirmed the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
 - If a pupil tests positive but has no symptoms for COVID-19 they must self-isolate for 10 days, starting from the day the test was taken.
 - If they develop symptoms during this isolation period, **they must restart** their 10-day isolation from the day they develop symptoms.
 - **Code X** should be used for the period of self-isolation until the outcome of the test is known. Once a positive result is confirmed, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
- After 10 days, if the pupil still has a temperature they should continue to self-isolate and seek medical advice. The pupil does not need to self-isolate after 10 days if they only have a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
 - **Code I** to be applied

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine:

As usual parents should plan their holidays as part of school breaks. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK;

- **Code X** is to be applied
- **From September, the normal rules will apply during the period of absence relating to the holiday dates.** Please refer to our main policy for guidance regarding holidays taken during term time.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Service

- All unauthorised absence is reported to the Education Welfare Service so the local authority can offer additional advice and support to parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is persistent, sanctions may be imposed to include warnings, penalty notices, prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.
- Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in the local authority issuing a Penalty Notice (please refer to our main Attendance Policy)
- Leave of absence can only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**, at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. **Holidays in term time are not viewed as exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.**
- Where the school and the Education Welfare Service have failed to locate the child/family within 20 school days, the child will be referred to the **Local authority Children Missing Education Pupil Tracking Officer** (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with the relevant agencies and follow the local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

*Link to DfE Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>