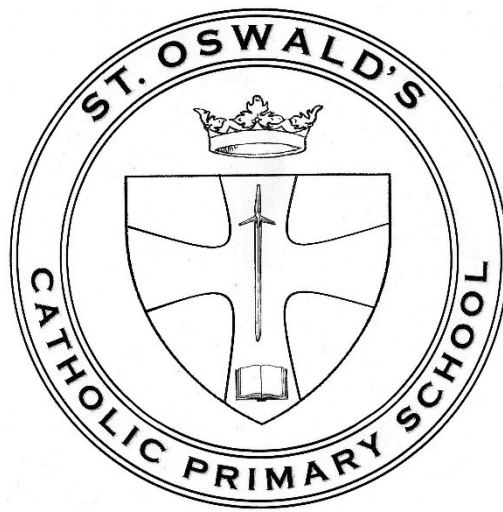


St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022-2023

Approved by:	Approval date	Renewal date
Standards Committee	6th October 2022	Autumn 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.

In **St Oswald's Catholic Primary 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) and **Local Authority** 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:

All Pupils

- **Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.**
- **Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.**
- **Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.**
- **Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.**
- **Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. In St Oswald's Catholic primary School this is Miss Hay.**

Pupils at risk of becoming Persistently Absent

- **Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.**
- **Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.**
- **Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.**

- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Persistently Absent Pupils

- Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Severely Absent Pupils

- Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for Cohorts of Pupils with Lower Attendance than their Peers

- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

Support for Pupils with Medical Conditions or SEND with Poor Attendance

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

Support for Pupils with a Social Worker

- Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
- See Appendix 1 for attendance policy stages
- See Appendix 2 for school daily absence procedures with regards to detailed guidelines.

Parental Responsibility:

All Pupils

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- To ensure child/children arrive to school on time avoiding unnecessary lateness.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent

(e.g. sickness).

- **Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.**
- **Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.**

Pupils at risk of becoming Persistently Absent

- **Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.**
- **Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.**

Persistently Absent Pupils and Severely Absent Pupils

- **Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.**
- **Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.**

Support for Pupils with Medical Conditions or SEND with Poor Attendance and Support for Pupils with a Social Worker

- **Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.**
- **Proactively engage with the support offered.**

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 phone parent, send a letter, organise a meeting or refer to 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 meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) are used to discuss particular concerns and agree approaches and plans for poor attendance. 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
2022-23

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

Stage 2 – If necessary a meeting with Family liaison officer/Deputy HeadTeacher 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.

Appendix 2
Daily Absence Procedures
2022-2023

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/school inventory.

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 absent 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.

Please note:

- Children on our PA or severely absent 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.
- The use of any codes other than I and M should always be agreed with Deputy Head.