

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Attendance (Pupils) Policy & Procedure

Status

Statutory

Introduction

All parents wish to give their children the best possible start in life, and recognise the importance of education. Regular attendance at school is essential if the best efforts of teachers are to achieve their aims. Regular attendance is also an important consideration for employers, who see it as an essential ingredient of reliability. It is no coincidence that regular attenders usually leave school with better skills and qualifications. Irregular attendance can, unfortunately, undermine the whole process of education, leading to severe disadvantage for the pupil. Children in school are far less likely to be tempted into crime and other anti-social behaviour, or to become victims of crime. For all these reasons the Catholic High School places the highest importance on regular attendance and also on punctuality.

Principles:

We believe a positive attendance and punctuality culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other.

	Expectations
Students We expect that all students will:	Attend school regularly and arrive on time (by 8.40am) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell a member of staff (e.g. Form Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Leader, Attendance Officer) about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and on time.
Parents/Carers We expect that all parents/carers will:	Encourage their children to attend school every day and on time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that they contact school on the first day of absence whenever their child is unable to attend school and each day that they are absent.• Send a note explaining the absence on the day their child returns.• Ensure that their children arrive in school fully prepared for the school day and provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers and not arrange family holidays or leave of absence during the school term.• Inform the school, in confidence, about any problem which might affect their child's attendance or behaviour.
School	Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs via

<p>Parents/carers can expect that the school will:</p>	<p>a published timetable which necessitates regular and punctual attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately complete attendance registers at the beginning of each session using SIMS ATTENDANCE. • Record late arrival accurately on SIMS and ensure that the school's sanctions policy is followed with regard to the allocation of sanctions (where appropriate). • Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason. • Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent. • Make every effort to encourage good attendance, punctuality and behaviour.
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Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

Our policy is to place more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective sanctions are necessary. We will encourage good attendance by:

- following-up absence on the first day wherever possible
- undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times
- recording good attendance on students' records, e.g. school report
- acknowledging individual's improvements in attendance
- providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and, where necessary, parents
- welcoming and supporting children returning to school after a long term absence and, where necessary, provide support via a Pastoral Leader.
- reward attendance for individual students on an annual basis
- encouraging improvement
- collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group and making this available to governors and to parents
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance during the induction process for new students via individual meetings with the Head Teacher and information given to parents during the evening events

Responding to Non-Attendance:

When a pupil fails to attend school without a satisfactory explanation, or if attendance levels fall below 90%* we will:

- contact the parent on the first day of absence wherever possible by telephone or through our automated Truancy Call
- contact the parent each day by telephone until their child returns or there is an explanation.

- send a letter to the parent/carer if they cannot be contacted.
- send a letter home to the parent/carer of a student where attendance is a concern
- record all holidays and leaves of absence taken in term time as unauthorised absence unless the Headteacher authorises the Leave of Absence. If the leave of absence is 5 days or more a Fixed Penalty will be applied.

The return to school and the reintegration of a pupil who returns to the school after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The Pastoral Leader in liaison with the Head of Year will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme.

Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee through the weekly briefing and consultation with individual staff as appropriate.

(* unless the school has been made aware of extenuating personal circumstances)

Punctuality and Lateness:

Registration times are 8.45am and Period 4 so students must be in their form rooms by 8.45am and their teaching rooms promptly for all lessons. The morning register will close at 9.30 am.

Students arriving after 8.45am will sign in at Student Services where they will be recorded as late. Students recorded as late after 8.45am must report to the Pastoral Hub at 3pm to attend a 1 hour Late Gate detention that day until 4pm.

Parents will have been informed by earlier in the day.

Students arriving after 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence until a satisfactory reason is provided by parents.

Students who are persistently late for school will have a meeting with their Head of Year/Pastoral Leader to identify any issues which need to be addressed.

The intention is that a strict line on punctuality will lead to improved attendance in the long term.

Roles and Responsibilities:

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the students the importance of the education being provided.

Role	Responsibility
Governors	<p>To ensure that the school has in place a whole school attendance and punctuality policy.</p> <p>To receive regular reports from the Headteacher in respect of attendance data and trends.</p> <p>To monitor the effectiveness of the whole school policy.</p>
Head Teacher	<p>To oversee the whole policy.</p> <p>To have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender and ethnicity and to those students who are Looked After.</p> <p>To report to governors on attendance issues on a regular basis.</p>
Heads of Year/Pastoral Leader	<p>To receive the analysis of attendance and punctuality data from the attendance officer.</p> <p>To report to the Headteacher on attendance and punctuality matters and trends as necessary.</p> <p>To initiate contact with parents / carers in the case of prolonged and unexplained absence.</p> <p>To ensure that the procedures provided by the Education Welfare Service are followed.</p>
Data Manager/Attendance Officer	<p>To collate attendance and punctuality data for each year group.</p> <p>To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.</p> <p>To ensure that all reasons for absence are recorded in the register.</p> <p>To follow-up any unexplained non-attendance by contacting the parent/carer by letter.</p>
Class Teachers / Form Tutor	<p>To complete registers accurately and on time.</p> <p>To inform the Head of Year/Pastoral Leader of any concerns.</p>

Purpose

We are obliged to remind parents that they have a **legal** obligation to ensure both regular and punctual attendance at school. It is always their responsibility to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence. This should be done as soon as possible on the **first day** of absence. On

return, a **written note** of explanation, signed by the parent/carer must be given to the **Form Tutor**. Truancy Call will be activated if notification has not been received from parents/carers.

Parents will appreciate that the school is legally bound to keep **attendance registers**, marked at the **beginning** of each morning by form tutors (registration) and by teachers (P4) afternoon lesson. Pupils not **physically** present are marked absent. Parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. The school will not accept *any* explanation as grounds for authorisation, only those where the absence could not reasonably have been avoided.

Absences are recorded in this way on our returns to the DfE, in Schools' Performance Tables, Reports to Governors and Parents, School Prospectus and Pupil Records.

In the first instance we would always try to work with parents and the child to resolve problems of attendance. However, if problems cannot be resolved in this way, then we may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer for the LA.

(Parents should be advised that Local Authorities can apply to the Courts for an Education Supervision Order in the event of irregular attendance, and, in extreme cases, may prosecute.)

Relationship to other policies

This policy is cross-referenced to the behaviour management and health and safety policies

Policy Details

(a) **Illness, medical and dental appointments.** If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence is treated as authorised. Appointments, where possible, should be arranged outside school time. A pupil would not normally be expected to be absent for a whole day for medical and dental appointments.

Absence for medical and dental appointments will be treated as **authorised** provided that **confirmation is received in writing** from the parent or an **appointment card** is produced. There is a 'signing in and out' book at reception.

(b) **Lateness.** Punctuality to school is vitally important. Lateness affects reports and references and, therefore, job prospects. Employers lay the greatest emphasis on punctuality. Late arrival, even if for a good reason, both disrupts the lesson for the late pupil and for other pupils too. A pupil arriving after 8.45 a.m. is **late**, but after 9.30 a.m. is recorded as **unauthorised absence**.

(c) **Special occasions.** An absence will be regarded as **authorised** only in the most exceptional circumstances. Any request for absence, for any reason, during term time must be made in person by the parent to the Headteacher, who will approve or not approve in line with documentation sent to parents at the start of the academic year.

(d) **Family bereavement.** The school would always respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals, and would expect the family, where possible, to contact the appropriate Head of Year.

(e) **Family holidays, leaves of absence or overseas visits in term time.** No leaves of absence will be authorised during term time and students will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The details will be forwarded to the Local Authority who may decide to issue a fixed penalty notice. The Headteacher may authorise holidays in exceptional circumstances.

(f) **Excluded pupils.** The absence will be recorded as **excluded/authorised**.

- (g) **Study leave.** When granted to Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils after they have completed examinations in each subject.
- (h) **Looking after brothers or sisters.** In most cases this is unacceptable and, therefore, **unauthorised absence.** Only in extreme circumstances will the Headteacher grant leave of absence. If the school is satisfied that the circumstances are both genuine and exceptional the absence may be regarded as **authorised.**
- (i) **Shopping during school hours.** This is unacceptable and will be treated as **unauthorised absence.**
- (j) **Public performance.** The Local Authority must license a pupil to take part in a public performance.

Approved Educational Activities

Pupils taking part in approved educational activities outside school are **no longer regarded as absent.**

Approved educational activities are:

- Field trips and educational visits in this country or abroad.
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities.
- Interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher education establishment (Year 11, 12 and 13 only) Very occasionally Yr 10 students may attend for interview with a prospective employer.
- Link course, (pupils attend an FE college for part of the time).
- Franchised pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site while remaining under supervision of the school (flexible arrangement short of dual registration). This can include special tuition or sick children taught at home but remaining on roll.
- Work Experience.

Ellesmere Port High School aims to achieve an excellent record of attendance. **Unauthorised absences** are few, and parents are most earnestly requested to lend their support in informing us of any problems which may affect the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Nothing benefits a pupil more than punctual, regular attendance, and the knowledge that home and school are working together to achieve that goal.

Education Welfare recommend, and the school has adopted, any absence not explained after 2 weeks of return should be marked as unauthorised. This action is to be completed by the Attendance Officer following approval for the action by the Head of Year.

Parental Access to Data

Real time reporting systems have been introduced for parents via the Parent Gateway. Parents have a secure login where they can view morning registration marks and A2L grades for all lessons as well as assessment information.

Care should always be taken when inputting data and procedures followed with regards to timing of the completion of registers in order to avoid parental queries

Registration

Attendance and punctuality policies and procedures provide form tutors with an opportunity for exercising pastoral care and motivating pupils. Pupils' attendance and punctuality records are of prime importance to employers. Pupils need to be informed that precise figures for both are recorded on confidential references as well as on annual school reports.

Given the importance of these records for our pupils it is also necessary that they are compiled fairly and consistently. A distinction needs to be made between arriving late to school and arriving late for registration. In the latter case the pupil may be on duty, performing at a special assembly etc. and should not be marked late. It is therefore essential that the form tutor is made aware of this before the event.

Attendance Registers are legal documents to be called only by a teacher in a formal, silent setting, at 8.45 am during registration and thereafter completed during every lesson. All registers are taken electronically via SIMS.

Only pupils who are physically present are to be marked present.

- **AM registration** - takes place between 8.45 am and 9.05 am
- **PM registration** - Lesson 4 is the lesson which is classed as pm registration

For legal reasons registers **must** be taken at these times.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The headteacher will arrange for the policy and procedures to be reviewed annually ahead of the prospectus and staff handbook being published.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:



J Coucill (Chair)

Governor Committee

School Community

Date:

October 2018

Date for Review:

July 2019