


St Ambrose Catholic Primary School
ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Date of Ratification: | February 2019 | Signed:  Mrs H Stewart (Acting Principal) Ms J Rowe (Acting Chair Of Academy Committee) |
| Review date: | February 2020 | Signed: Mrs E Brocklesby (Principal) Ms J Rowe (Acting Chair Of Academy Committee) |

All members of the school community are treated with the respect and sensitivity implicit within our Catholic ethos and the practice of a code of equal opportunities and inclusion. Equality of treatment and opportunity operate regardless of background, ability, gender, religion, disability or ethnicity.

This is a hardworking school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is **unavoidable**.

It is **very important** therefore that you make sure that your child **attends regularly** and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including missing part of a lesson due to lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and*
- b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents and carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to you at parent evenings each term on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and progress; *and*
- reward good or improving attendance through certificates, gifts and prizes at the end of each term.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (**not by the parents/carers**), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed will receive an authorised late mark.
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays; *and*
- day trips and holidays in term time **which have not been agreed**.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing **considerable damage** to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Push notifications will be sent out to a parent when their child reaches 92% to ensure a parent is aware that their child is close to 90%. Parents will also receive a push notification when their child has moved above 90%.

Attendance at 90% or below

When a child has reached the 90% or below mark **for any reasons, including only genuine absences**, the Principal will write to parents to alert them and notify them that until their child's attendance improves to above 90% **no further absences will be authorised unless evidence is provided**.

Evidence includes appointment cards, evidence of medicines being prescribed by a doctor or evidence of the circumstances necessitating the absence from school. **If evidence is not provided then any absence will be unauthorised. There are consequences of unauthorised absence detailed below.**

Please note this only applies for the period until your child's absence reaches above 90%.

Attendance at 85% or below

When a child's absence falls to 85% or below we will have already been in contact several times and offered every support possible. The Principal will write to parents to inform them that their child's attendance may be referred to the Educational Welfare Office who have legal powers to prosecute, issue penalty notices and make home visits. The Educational Welfare Office is independent of the school and is part of the local authority.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, ideally by 9.00am;
- or call into school and report to the office staff.

If your child is absent we will:

- send you a push notification on the first day of absence asking you to contact school if we have not heard from you by 9.30am;
- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 1pm;
- reserve the right to visit your home to enquire why your son or daughter is absent;
- if absences persist we will invite you in to discuss the situation with the Principal,
- refer the matter of persistent absenteeism to the local authority for possible intervention.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have two up to date numbers – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Lateness:

Being late is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, especially phonics and grammar. It can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school doors open at **8.45 am. Parents/ carers are responsible for their children until 8.45am.** If you send your child to school before 8.45 am their safety is **your** responsibility – **not the school's.** Children must not be left unsupervised in anywhere around the school. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure they are looked after until school opens at 8.45am. Any parent leaving a child unsupervised before school may be reported to Children's Services.

Registers are marked by **9.00 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in the classroom by that time.

The class register closes by 9.00am. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be at school, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a **Penalty Notice** if the problem persists. All lates after the close of the register will be coded as 'U'.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Principal and/or Educational Welfare officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Please note that the school reserves the right to **unauthorise** persistent lateness and this can lead to referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not asking to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the 2013 Education Regulations. These amendments, as described below, come into force on the 1st September 2013.

The 2006 Education Regulations allowed head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Any period of absence taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as **unauthorised** and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer who may instigate sanctions such as a **Penalty Notice**. In some cases the child may **lose their school place (be removed from school roll)** if there is a period of **unauthorised absence**, including extended leave.

If a Parent requires a holiday form they must book an appointment to see the Principal.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The minimum target level of attendance for this school is **96%** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in letters home and we ask for your full support.

People responsible for ensuring good attendance:

Mrs E. Brocklesby Principal
Mrs H. Stewart Vice Principal
Miss L. Holtom Assistant Principal

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, every parent/carer has a duty to make sure that their child/ren attends.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cycle for reviewing policies.