



St. Paul's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Our Mission Statement

"Do everything with love."

(St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 16:14)

This means that we will...

- *Show our love for Jesus in everything we say and do*
- *Respect everyone by recognising that God made us all different but equally valued.*
- *Strive for excellence and find ways to share, develop and celebrate our talents.*
- *Promote a safe, happy and enjoyable environment.*
- *Actively support our school, parish and the wider community.*

At St Paul's school we believe that regular attendance at school is essential if children are to benefit from their school care. Optimum levels of attendance can only be fully achieved when responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: pupils, parents, school staff, governors, and the local community.

1. The Law

The law states that all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) should attend school regularly to obtain the maximum benefit from their education.

1.2. Parents

The 1996 Education Act Section 7 states that it is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The Act (section 576) also defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

1.3 Completing the register

Registers are legal documents that may be used in evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences. They are retained in school for a period of three years. The governing body are legally responsible for the attendance register and must register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

In the register children will be entered under their legal name, i.e. the name on their birth certificate or as changed by deed poll, their known as name may be shown on the register in brackets.

Registers at St Paul's school are completed using the SIMS system. See appendix 1 for a copy of the SIMS codes.

2.1 Lateness

- If children are late (after 8:55 am) they should be brought to the school office and parents are asked to provide an explanation for their child's lateness. If a parent does not accompany the child to the front office, the child will be asked their reason for lateness.
- Any child who arrives after 9:25 a.m. is considered to be late after the register has closed. This is recorded in the register and on the SIM's system as an unauthorised absence.
- If a child is regularly late for school teachers and administrative staff should inform the Family Support Worker, who will inform the Head teacher if necessary.

- The Family Support Worker will monitor lateness and will contact parents to address the problem.
- It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child is collected at 3:30 pm.

2.2 Communication

- On the first day of absence school expect parents to inform them of the absence. The school will text or phone the parent if we have not heard a reason for their child's absence.
- Reasons for absence are recorded in the school office and transferred onto computer by the Family Support Worker. All letters from parents regarding absence should be sent to the school office or class teacher.
- Parents are asked to provide a written explanation of absence when the child returns to school. An email or text is an acceptable way of communication.

3.Absences.

3.1 If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether this was authorised or unauthorised.

- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent, or has accepted an explanation as a satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents are expected to complete a Leave of Absence Form (available from the school office) for all absences other than sickness. (See appendix 2)

- **All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.**

Children who have 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence may be referred to the School Attendance Team. Parents and children will then have a time frame to improve attendance. Should attendance not improve in this time they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

3.2 Authorised absence

The Department for Education (DFE) points out that it is the school which authorises an absence and that a note containing an unacceptable explanation for an absence does not allow it to be treated as authorised. Parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. If school feels a child has too many authorised absences we will inform the parents that future absences may not be authorised without additional assurances or evidence.

Medical/Dental appointments should, if possible be arranged outside of the school day or within the school holidays. Where this is not possible it is expected that children only miss part of the school day. Proof of medical/dental appointments during school time, must be given to the front office or class teacher.

See appendix 3 for further details on authorised absence.

3.3 Unauthorised absence

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) (Education Observed, 13) offer the following definition of unauthorised absence:

"Absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence."

See appendix 4 for circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absence.

3.4 Removing pupils from roll.

When a pupil leaves St Paul's Catholic Primary School they will not be removed from the school roll until they have been accepted onto the roll of another school or until we have authorisation from the Local Authority (LA) to remove the child from the school roll.

3.5 Suspected changes of address

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, and the school and School Attendance Team are unable, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the child, the child should be removed from the school roll after a period of 4 weeks and their name will be placed on the school to school (S2S) site for missing children. The period from when the child stopped attending the school until removed from roll should not count against unauthorised absence returns.

3.6 Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will not be authorised. Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Head teacher. The school strongly encourage parents to book their holidays in the school holidays. The school holiday dates are published well in advance.

3.7 Extended absence abroad

Only in exceptional circumstances can leave be extended beyond 10 school days in any academic year. If teachers are asked by parents about leave beyond this time they should inform the Head teacher who will make further enquiries before making a decision. Children who go on an extended absence abroad must complete a Leave of Absence form and indicate an intended return date. Any children who do not return to school on the specified return date may be removed from the school roll and put on schools to schools site.

4.1 The role of the school

Whilst the Head teacher is the only person in school who can authorise absence it is recognised that other members of staff also play a vital role in following up absence. When a child is absent without explanation school will endeavour to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates will be placed in the register by class teachers and then kept in individual pupil's files in the school office.

Support will be offered to parents as appropriate.

School staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils
- Monitor every child's attendance
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a child fails to attend school, where no reason for their absence has been received
- Follow up unexplained absences
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment, and a sympathetic response to children's concerns
- Make initial enquiries with parents/carers of children who are not attending school regularly, express their concerns and support the family with attendance
- Refer unauthorised attendance issues to the School Attendance Team

4.2 The role of the parent

Whatever efforts are made by the School, the Family Support Worker and the School Attendance Team, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to see that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies to encourage good attendance may fail.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as promptly as possible and to provide any further information/evidence which may be required. For any absence other than sickness a Leave of Absence form must be completed. Parents are expected to attend meetings with school to discuss their child's attendance and take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance parents are expected to work with the Family Support Worker and class teacher to achieve the targets set.

5.1 Referrals for non-attendance

The School Attendance Team will become involved when:

- School has worked with parents explaining concerns over level of attendance/ unauthorised absence (Pupils have 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term)
- Children have gone on holiday which has not been authorised.

5.2 The role of the Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker is a full-time member of staff at St. Paul's Catholic Primary School. She supports parents whose children have attendance issues, she also deals with lateness.

The Family Support Worker carries out home visits, meetings in school with parents/carers, liaises with other services and works in partnership with school and families at setting attendance targets for pupils. The Family Support Worker also works closely with the School Attendance Team.

A further role of the Family Support Worker is to investigate whether parents have committed a criminal offence with regard to irregular attendance. Evidence gained from the investigation may be used in legal proceedings which will be initiated by the School Attendance Team.

6. Rewards for good attendance

Class teachers constantly praise children for good attendance and this will also be highlighted in assemblies. The attendance cup will be awarded weekly to the class with the best attendance for the previous week. Attendance will also be celebrated on the attendance board in the dining hall and a display in the link corridor. Parents are actively encouraged to celebrate good attendance with their children.

Children who achieve 100% attendance in a term receive a certificate in assembly. Letters are sent home to parents congratulating them on this good attendance and each child will receive an appropriate attendance reward. Children with improving attendance are rewarded with certificates and letters home to parents.

100% attendance for the year is celebrated in prize giving assembly with pupils being given an appropriate reward from the school.

We also celebrate the attendance at our progress and achievement assembly which is held annually.

At St Paul's school we believe good attendance is vital for our children to gain the maximum from their time in school. We aim to work collaboratively with all involved parties for the benefit of all of our children. At any time school may reward good attendance in other ways and may hold specific attendance drives to promote good attendance at school. These will always be clearly communicated to children and parents.

Reviewed September

Approved by _____ Headteacher

_____ Governor

Review date September 2017

Appendix 1 – SIMS codes

/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
#	School closed for all pupils
-	All should attend no mark recorded
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Annual holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not med/dental appointment)
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/ dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised absences (not covered by any other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
X	Non compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

**To be completed by Parent/Carer/Guardian
(one form to be completed for each child)**

Name of Pupil:		DOB	
School:			Year/Class:

Your request will be considered by the Headteacher. Please note all requests will be judged on an individual basis but any leave of absence can only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

Dates for requested leave of absence: From To

Number of days that have been requested:

Please give brief reasons for your request for the leave of absence.

Parent(s) Name:

Address:

Is there any other parent living at this address? Yes*/No *If yes Name:

Signature(s).....Date.....

Address of any **non-resident** parent

To be completed by School

Your request for leave of absence **has/has not*** been approved for the following reason(s):
Please see attached letter* (*delete as appropriate)

Date received by school: Date refusal letter was sent:

Headteacher's Signature: Date:

The code placed in the register will be: (please circle relevant code)	C Performance (licence required) /Exceptional circumstances	G Unauthorised Leave of absence	H Authorised Leave of absence	O Unauthorised (other reason)	P Approved sporting activity	R Religious observance
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Appendix 3 – authorised absences

An absence may be counted as authorised if a child is absent:

- When prevented from attending by illness
- Leave which has been authorised by the Head teacher due to exceptional circumstances
- On a day set aside for religious observance
- Participating in a public performance

Furthermore school may “reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave” for:

- Absence following the death of a close member of the child’s family.

Appendix 4 – unauthorised absences

Circumstances that may lead to parentally condoned absences include:

- The child’s father/ mother/ carer being ill
- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who have arrived at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and leave in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Head teacher
- Truancy before or during the school day