

**THE FEDERATION OF
ALL SAINTS &
ST MARGARET'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS**

**ATTENDANCE
POLICY**

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Staff and Governors expect full and punctual attendance from all pupils.

Principles

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (i.e. illness or other unavoidable cause).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 10.00 am. When the pupil returns, he or she must bring a written note, signed by the parent for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments, etc. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 10.00 am, the School Secretary will contact the parent by telephone or text as a matter of concern.

Holidays

Holidays taken in term time are no longer permitted. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on **1st September 2013** state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

Government policy states that parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

Lateness

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. A late mark is awarded if arrival is between 9.05 and 10.00am. Absence mark is given if arrival is after 10.05am.