

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School

'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration.'

Attendance Policy

Committee responsible for policy	Community Committee
Approved by Committee /FGB	January 2024
Statutory/Non-statutory	STATUTORY
Frequency of Review	Free to determine – when there are changes to the law
Date of last review	February 2023
Date of next review	February 2025
Purpose of policy	To fulfil the governing body duties in connection with attendance at school
Consultation	working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures .
Links to other policies	Medical

Aims

At St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School, we operate a Whole School Attendance Policy – that is, we want everybody to be part of the process of promoting and encouraging good attendance at our school, reducing absence, (including persistent and severe absence) and acting early to address any patterns of absence.

It is the law that parents are responsible for making sure that their children receive a suitable full-time education. At St Edmund's we view this as a shared responsibility and use guidance from the recommendations within [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106522/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) May 2022 to support this. We aim to build strong relationships with our families to ensure pupils have the support in place to enable them to attend school.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The linked governor for attendance is Mr Mark Brown.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance, including building relationships with parents/carers
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Creating intervention re-integration plans as appropriate and delivering targeted support

Class teachers are responsible for

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

School office will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- If your child misses registration and the school have not been notified, the office will contact you to check on your child's whereabouts.
- School starts at 8.45am. Children are **late** from 8.50am and this will be recorded as late in the school register.
- Where no reason is given for absence, **the absence will be unauthorised**. The school will contact parents to follow up unexplained absences. Once an explanation has been received the status of the absence may change.
- The parent/carer has until 10am each day to contact the school. The office will send an email to enquire about absence. If a response is not received by 10.30am, the office will call to follow up. If no response is received the office will advise the Headteacher who will decide next steps.

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time 8.45.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 10am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Research shows that there is a clear link between attendance, punctuality and pupil attainment. The minimum target for each child at our school is 95% attendance. Children whose attendance falls below 95% in any given year may find it difficult to keep up with their peers and often fall below national and local educational expectations. They are more likely to struggle later on in life if this becomes a regular pattern of behaviour.

Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and again at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.
- Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- The school will call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance and in consultation with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Additional absences that may be authorised are bereavement, education at another establishment, visits to other schools (secondary transfer, entrance exams), approved sporting activity, or participation in a performance.
- It is at the discretion of the head teacher whether longer absences for reasons other than illness would be authorised.
- Parents/carers need to make an appointment with the Headteacher should they require an absence for any other reason – permission will not be granted to leave school early for cheaper transport at beginning and end of terms in the event of travel. The school does not authorise any holidays taken during term time.
- Please do not put your child in a position where they cannot tell the truth about absence eg if they are on holiday.

For safeguarding reasons, children without explanations for absence or whose parents have not been in touch with the school, will be reported to the Local Authority and may be placed on the 'Children Missing Education' list. Missing Education could be an indicator of other issues, for example, neglect, abuse, child sexual exploitation and must be followed up.

Lateness and Punctuality

- School starts at 8.45am. Children are **late** from 8.50am and this will be recorded as late in the school register.
- Late children go via the school office to receive a yellow slip – this way the school know that their presence has been recorded on the registration system.

- We encourage all children to be on time and will contact parents to ask if there is anything we can do to support them in getting their children to school on time.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels if they become a concern. They are also reported to parents in their child's annual report.

Approval for term-time absence

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is celebrated and rewarded with:

- Half termly class attendance certificate and reward (benches in assembly)
- Individual Annual Attendance pencils/badges for 100%

Monitoring Attendance

The school will

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- The Educational Welfare Officer also monitors school attendance termly and may make visits to the family of those children who have frequent absences or persistent lateness in order to find ways to support and improve their attendance.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

The school look forward to working with you and your family.