

St Osmund's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Teaching and Learning Committee
Governor Lead:	Sister Josephine Goggin
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Michelle Lunney
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Signed (Chair of Governors)	A. Cole
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Aims and objectives

It is our aim at St Osmund's, that all pupils reach their potential, academically, personally, spiritually and socially. The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that good attendance contributes significantly to students' enjoyment of school and their academic achievement.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower overall academic achievement. Poor attendance at school and lateness may also potentially be an indicator of abuse and neglect.

We are committed to ensuring that children are in school every day that they are fit and healthy to do so through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Creating an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by the school.
- Raising awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Working in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Publishing attendance and punctuality data regularly.
- Establishing a pattern of monitoring attendance and punctuality and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

We are committed to enabling all children to reach the highest possible standards in all aspects of learning. We want all children to derive the maximum benefit from the educational provision we offer through ensuring that every child receives their entitlement to 5 days a week schooling throughout the academic year. It is well documented that there is a consistent correlation between poor attendance and lower than average attainment. **Pupils who attend school more often (over 95%) typically achieve higher academic results than those who attend less often (below 95%).**

The Impact of Poor Attendance

Poor attendance can have a significant impact on a child's learning and social development. This is because:

- Valuable learning opportunities that connect with previous and future learning are missed
- There is a lack of continuity in the child's learning and development experiences.
- Learning routines and social interactions are disrupted and broken which can be highly unsettling, especially for young children.
- Self-esteem is frequently negatively impacted on return to school because learning has become harder
- A child can become socially isolated because the games and social interactions have moved on in their absence.

The Impact of Persistent Lateness

Persistent lateness creates a number of avoidable difficulties:

- the self-esteem of the child concerned is negatively affected: the child often feels embarrassed because all their peers notice their late entry to classroom
- the day starts off in a negative way for the child concerned – that can have a significant influence on what follows
- our morning routine provides opportunities for important retrieval practice which is missed by the child who arrives late
- the learning of all the other children who arrived at school on time is interrupted, as the teacher has to explain what the class are doing to the late child
- additional, unnecessary work is created for busy administrative staff.

Legislation and guidance

It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school during term time, and that the school is properly informed about the reasons for non-attendance, including illness.

This policy meets the requirements of the [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](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Child Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

If a child is absent

- Parents/carers should contact the school office by 8:55 by email or telephone every day of the child's absence. The class teacher will record the absence in the register, which is electronically sent to the office for the correct absence category to be marked by the Attendance Officer, following receipt of absence notification from the parent/carer.
- The school office staff will endeavour to contact a parent/carer if a message or reason for absence has not been received.
- Where a child has a longer term medical condition which lasts over a week, the Parents/carers should update the school on the child's condition at regular intervals agreed by the headteacher.
- If a child has a medical appointment, a copy of the appointment card or letter should be provided to the school ahead of the appointment. Wherever possible appointments should be made outside of school hours but if not, the child should return to school as soon as possible to complete the school day.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then make contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. It is important that the school receives accurate information, either by note or telephone notification, to determine the correct category. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- If a child is unwell on the day before or immediately after a school holiday then proof of illness is required, either a doctor's note or appointment card, otherwise the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Requests for leave of absence

Children are expected to attend school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that occasionally there are very exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child.

Under these circumstances, parents should make a request to the headteacher in writing, detailing the reason for the absence and the proposed dates. This may be followed up with an appointment with the headteacher to discuss reasons for the request.

Family holidays in term time do not qualify as a reason for granting leave of absence. The Governing Body has a firm policy not to authorise holidays in term time unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Any unauthorised holiday absences of five days or longer will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue parents/carers with a fixed penalty notice (FPN).

Long-term absence

If it seems likely that a child's absence due to illness or a medical condition will continue for an extended period (15 days or more), or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA). The LA have the responsibility to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream or special school because of their health.

In some cases, where a child is hospitalised, the hospital may provide education for the child within the hospital and the LA would not need to arrange any additional education, provided it is satisfied that the child is receiving suitable education. See link to statutory guidance below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needswho-cannot-attend-school>

Repeated absences

- Individual attendance is monitored each day by the School Attendance Officer and discussed with the Senior Leadership Team.
- The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unexplained absence requesting details.
- Attendance figures are analysed each week to identify patterns of absence or attendance concerns.
- If a child has a repeated number of absences and their attendance is a concern the parents or carers will be contacted to raise awareness of the need to improve attendance and may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school each half-term basis and will review all cases where attendance has fallen below 90%. Attendance of below 90% is categorised as Persistent Absence (PA).
- When attendance is below 90% proof of absence will be required, for example in the case of illness a letter or GP appointment card will be required.
- If attendance does not improve, the EWO will arrange a visit with the parents/carers at school or home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The School and EWO will work with the family to support an improvement in attendance so that the case can be closed.

Continued absence and legal intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, at SCHOOL we will work with our other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support.

Where support and intervention is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education the school will work with the local authority and make use of the full range of legal interventions considering the individual circumstances of a family.

- Parenting Contracts
- Education Supervision Orders (ESO)
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting Orders
- Fixed Penalty Notices

Lateness

- The school doors open at 8.45am to allow children to be in class and ready to start learning by 8.55am.
- Children arriving after 8.55am will be deemed as late and marked in the register accordingly (code L).
- Children who are persistently late miss significant learning opportunities - the start of the day is a particularly important time to share information for the day.
- Children arriving particularly late will be marked as an unauthorised absence for that session (code U).
- If a child is late parents and children are required to report to the office, to ensure that the attendance register is updated.
- Late entries will be monitored regularly and lateness figures will be reported in pupils' end of year school reports.
- The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who is repeatedly late for school. The parents or carers may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- If the situation does not improve, the school may involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will arrange a visit at school or at home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- Together the school and EWO service will identify strategies with the parent or guardian to resolve the lateness issues.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance is a standing agenda item addressed at all FGB meetings and forms part of the Head's report which is shared at all sub-committees. Teaching and Learning committee meetings.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaises with the education Welfare service, where necessary.

The attendance team (School Office Administrators)

The attendance team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for supporting and monitoring attendance and punctuality through recording attendance on a daily basis, through Integris and submitting this information to the school office. They are responsible for submitting a complete register at 9am for the first session of the day and again by after lunch for the second session of the day.

School office staff

School Administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They also record if a child has arrived at school late. Administration staff are also responsible for making first day of absence phone calls and processing the school's daily evacuation report following the closure of registers.

Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of the Governors, who are also responsible for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out, to monitor overall attendance.
- Attendance will be reported at each Full Governing Body Meeting and at all sub-committees.
- The Attendance Team will be responsible for monitoring lateness and attendance throughout the school. Any concerns about a child's absence will be brought to the attention of the headteacher and agreed procedures put into place.