

St. George's Catholic Primary School **'Achieve, Believe, Care.'**

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

"There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects.

Good school attendance also shows future employers that a young person is reliable, more likely to achieve well and play a positive role in their community."

At St George's, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, we take a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they consider at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

At St George's Catholic Primary School, we welcome everyone as a member of God's family. With Jesus in our hearts, we pray together, we work together, we show respect for each other and the world around us. We love God, ourselves and one another.

2. RATIONALE

At St George's we recognise our vocation to educate our children to enable them to take their place in society as children of God, made in His image and likeness. Missing school means missing out.

Our children need be in school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

Many children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult.

At St George's we work in partnership with our parents and any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, we work hard to sort out between the school, the parents and the child at the earliest possible stage. We always follow up absences, monitoring, supporting and always taking the necessary actions to ensure that every child is able to fulfil their right to a happy and safe education.

We encourage all parents to come and speak to us, no worry or concern is too small. It is never better to cover up children's absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

3. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure attendance meets and aims to exceed Government targets
- Create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school

4. EXPECTATIONS

To ensure that children are in School for the maximum number of days. Our expectations are that:

- Your child arrives at school on time at 8.45 am ready for registration
- To inform school on the first day of absence and keep in contact with the school regarding the absence
- To request leave as far in advance as possible
- To make applications for leave in writing on the School's Leave of Absence Form giving the reason for the request
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day

St George's Catholic and Primary School must:

- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Have appropriate registration processes in place

- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school **initially with a first-day absence** telephone call or email
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
- To report to Governors and the Local Authority on attendance
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance and punctuality

5. LATENESS

Morning registration closes at 8.55am; A 'late mark' is given for arrivals after 8.45 am and up to 8.55am. Arrival after 8.55 am will result in an unauthorised absence (code U). A reason for lateness must be given by parents on arrival at school. Persistent lateness will be followed up according to Local authority policy procedures. 12 plus unauthorised sessions may result in a penalty notice.

6. AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school will be recorded by staff at the school 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 like illness or an unavoidable cause in an emergency.

Unauthorised Absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Taking holidays or leave that have not been approved by the Headteacher in advance
- Parent unwell and cannot bring their child to school. Parents have a responsibility for their child to receive an education.

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.'

7. POOR ATTENDANCE

At St George's Catholic Primary School, we will contact parents to work with them to resolve attendance problems. We work with families to resolve any problems together. Every case is dealt

with according to the family need and concern. As a school we provide support in every way possible to improve attendance. In the case of continual difficulties after continual support and guidance, a referral has to be made to the Local Authority.

8. PROCEDURES

Attendance is reviewed on a daily basis and is followed up. Weekly figures are analysed by the Headteacher and termly analysis is shared with the Governing Body and actions discussed. The Headteacher meets with the link Governor for attendance to share information on attendance figures.

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is (below 90% over the school year). These are called “persistent absentees” by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence.

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

- Morning registration closes at 8.55am and after this time it results in an unauthorised absence.
- Parents need to contact the school office to report an absence.
- Any request for absence (exceptional circumstances) during term time must be sent in writing or discussed with the Headteacher who will judge the circumstances.
- Any decision regarding term time absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- The school will always share up to date attendance records with a letter as part of the approval procedure regarding term time absence requests.

All unauthorised absences are rigorously followed up for explanation.

Term-time holiday

It is not usually possible for the school to authorise absences for looking after other children, minding the house, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may however, be granted on compassionate grounds in an emergency (e.g. after the death of a close relative). This is always at the discretion of the headteacher.

A request for a term-time holiday is **NOT** a parental right. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances but **arrangements should not be made without the school’s agreement in advance**. Taking leave without permission is “unauthorised” absence and can be subject to a Penalty Notice fine or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority. If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school times wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance if at all possible. A “present” mark may still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

- Where medical appointments are during school hours, parents **MUST** inform the school office in advance. Medical appointments resulting in children arriving late will have been marked as M.
- On arriving at school they will be marked as present for that session. Their arrival time will be noted.
- If the medical appointment keeps them out of school all morning and they return at/after lunch they will be marked as medical absence for the morning session only.

10. The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Emma Phillips & Mrs Sarah Molloy (Office Managers)
Miss Cairns (Headteacher)

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or as required by changes in legislation.

Latest guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

