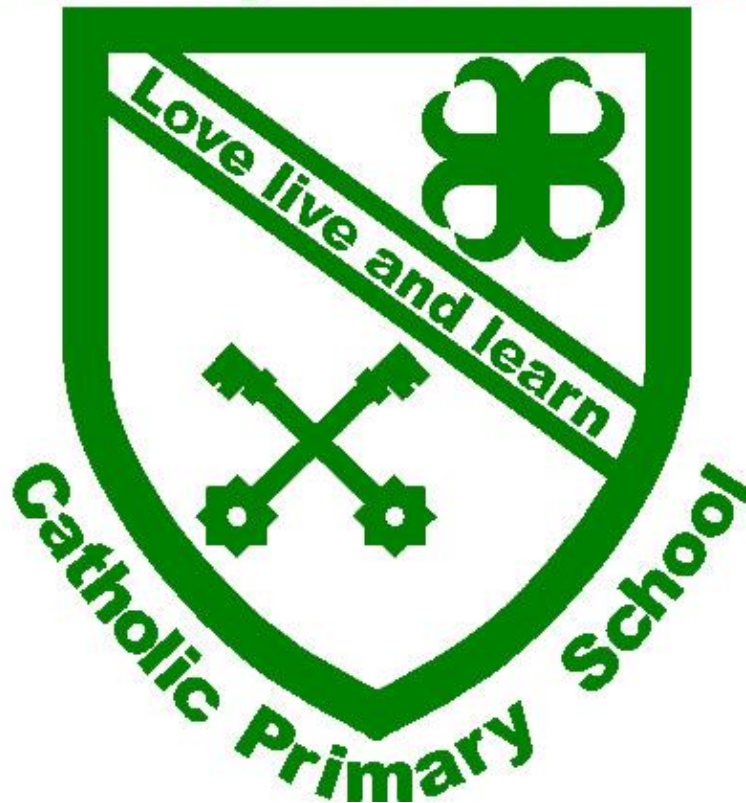


Our Lady & St Swithin's



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2020-2021

As a Catholic Community centred on God's love, respecting all, we are committed to enable and encourage each person to be cared for in body, mind and spirit ensuring each individual achieves their full potential in a secure and caring environment.

OUR LADY & ST SWITHIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

All children of compulsory school age have the right to a full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs he/she may have. Regular attendance at school is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

Here at Our Lady & St Swithin's Catholic Primary School we take our responsibility to monitor and promote regular attendance of all our pupils seriously. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within the school. This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, teachers, education welfare services and parents/carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures we have in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our school will:

- promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- ensure that all pupils and parents understand the issues, procedures and importance of attendance and punctuality in school
- ensure that all staff and governors promote opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes in attendance
- give parents and pupils the opportunity to raise concerns and share the addressing of those concerns e.g. setting and sharing attendance targets
- ensure attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently Rights and Responsibilities.

At Our Lady & St Swithin's we will:

- keep an attendance record to meet all legal requirements as set out by the DfE
- develop clear procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- work in partnership with parents, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and pupils in order to maintain good attendance
- implement procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO who will endeavour to support families with all aspects of school attendance
- support pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

Parents have prime responsibility for ensuring that their children are educated and should understand that they may be subject to further sanctions which can include the use of using penalty notices and/or legal proceedings to secure regular school attendance if their child does not attend school regularly and punctually. They should also make sure that their children arrive, in full school uniform, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attending school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular. Roles within school to maintain good attendance.

The class teacher has a duty to:

- accurately complete the class register for the morning and afternoon sessions and record a child late if they arrive to class before the register has been taken to the office
- ask children/parents for reasons for absence when a child has been away
- be aware of the children who have attendance/punctuality difficulties and the procedures that have been put in place in order to monitor this
- liaise with the Headteacher/Admin Assistant about any new attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative staff will have a duty to:

- recording all children who come into school after 9.00 am ensuring registers are changed to record the child as late
- telephone parents on the first day of their child's absence if they have not previously contacted the school
- record comments in SIMS to explain absence or lateness
- ensure all reasons for absence are recorded and authorised in SIMS
- keep a 'signing out' book in order to keep a check on pupils who leave school early i.e. before 3.15 p.m. for appointments.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring of pupil attendance and punctuality. This involves:

- overseeing the role of the class teacher
- responsibility for authorising and un-authorising absence whether they be absences for personal/other circumstances. registering an unauthorised absence when no reason has been received after two weeks
- liaising with parents, informing them of any concerns and working with them in order to improve attendance and punctuality of their child
- overseeing the maintenance of weekly and official registers, absence notes and communication with parents
- having regular meetings with the EWO to discuss specific more persistent cases needing further action

- setting targets each year for attendance
- instigating an action plan for all strategies to promote attendance and punctuality in Our Lady & St Swithin's school
- being responsible keeping up to date any new relevant legislation School Procedures for Recording Attendance.

The school day starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. If a child arrives at school after 9.00 a.m. without prior arrangements having been agreed, he/she should report to the school office. Registers are taken to the school office at 9.10 a.m. and arrival at school after this time, without prior approval or extenuating circumstances, will be recorded as late. If a child arrives after 9.30 a.m. when registers have closed they may be given an unauthorised absence unless a sufficient explanation for the lateness can be ascertained. It is the decision of the headteacher to authorise or un-authorise the late. Evidence of a medical appointment should be given. All staff should be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for purpose of fire regulations. The Admin Assistant will aim to contact any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence, wherever possible, by 10.00 a.m. The offered reasons for lateness will have comments entered and any absences will have the appropriate code entered into the system. If no reason has been provided and no contact made then the Admin Assistant may call out on a home visit. Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone, in person or by letter. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- the child is ill or is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- the child is dual registered, attending another school If a child is collected from school for an appointment during a morning or afternoon session then the parents must sign the child out giving the time and reason for leaving. Strategies in place for supporting Attendance & Punctuality Weekly Each week the Admin Assistant will use the SIMS system to find the weekly attendance for each registration group. Each class teacher will receive a % for their class, an attendance chart will be kept to show how well each class is doing. If the children are in school each day they are entered into a raffle for a £10 prize awarded at the achiever assembly on Friday morning. (On hold until children fully return to school.)

Half Termly / Termly. The Admin Assistant will inform the admin staff of all children who have achieved 100% attendance during the term. The admin staff will produce certificates for attendance to be distributed at the achiever assembly held in the first week back after the term. (Half term certificates then Autumn term Bronze and Spring term Silver). Annual Children who have had 100% attendance for the full academic year will receive a Gold certificate. (On hold until children fully return to school.)

Holidays in term time in instances of leave taken in term time e.g. for the purpose of a family holiday, a penalty notice of £60 will be issued by the Local Authority, after liaison with the EWO. Our Lady and St Swithin's will consider every aspect of a pupil's case before judging whether or not to issue a Penalty Notice. In certain circumstances Penalty Notices will not be issued for example, members of the Armed Forces who are unable to plan their leave. Persistent Absence for any child whose absences continue to be a concern we may request medical evidence. Failure to provide such evidence may result in unauthorised absence and referral to the EWO for further support or interventions.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Admin Assistant will review the attendance of all pupils on a daily basis. Any pupils identified as cause for concern or less than 90% attendance will be monitored daily. A letter will be sent to the parents of pupils identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any issues that may be impeding their child from attending school. The pupil's attendance will continue to be closely monitored and if there appears to be no improvement the parents will be invited to meet with the Headteacher. If the parents do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral will be made to the EWO. The school registration system provides many reports which will be shared with the EWO when monitoring a pupil's attendance.

Monitoring attendance will involve:-

- monitoring attendance and punctuality figures weekly using the statistics from SIMS
- evaluating the success of targets for attendance and unauthorised absence using the figures obtained each term for the EWO and the yearly annual figures from DfES
- meeting with the EWO annually in order to evaluate the success of the school's attendance action plan and formulate a plan for the next academic year. To be reviewed September 2021

Attendance Addendum September 2020

National Context

From September attendance becomes compulsory for all pupils who are registered at a school. This means, from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age.
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- the availability to use the local authority's statutory interventions to support regular attendance at school.

We appreciate that some parents may be worried about their children returning to school and some pupils will need additional support in the transition back to full time education.

The DfE recommend all schools:

Consider any concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the appropriate support in place to address this.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, the recommendation is for schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc)

Statutory responsibility and Guidance

Parents

From September, Parent/carers will return to being legally responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age (5yrs-16yrs) receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at an alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent/carer can choose to educate their child at home).

If a pupil is registered at a school, parent/carers are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, attend regularly and are punctual.

- Parents must notify school if a child is unable to attend and the reason for the absence. It is the school, not the parent, who decide if the absence should be authorised.

Schools

Schools should continue to promote good attendance and work to reduce absence, particularly persistent absence; at the start of the new academic year, the government has stated schools will need to ensure all pupils have access to a full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address the reasons for absence.

Pupil Attendance Registration

The law requires all schools to enter pupils on the admissions and attendance register from the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (in the morning) and once during the second session (in the afternoon).

For the autumn term schools will be allowed to stagger the start and end of the school day.

Schools will not be permitted to operate a rota system. All pupils will be expected to return to school, unless a statutory reason applies.

Absence relating to COVID-19

For the autumn term It will still be an essential requirement that pupils who are ill stay at home. Attached is a flowchart for what to do if someone has symptoms of COVID-19.



FLOWCHART (8).pdf

Addendum Attendance Policy

Schools may wish to consider adopting the attached addendum attendance policy to cover the period between September 2020 and January 2021 related to COVID absence procedures. Code guidance is included within the document.

Code Guidance

On the 6th of August, the DfE issued guidance regarding the recording of attendance for the academic year 2020/2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

Examples of the use of the COVID code X are located in the Addendum Attendance Policy.

SIM's guidance -The X code can be added on the edit marks screen or registers for any individual pupil or for multiple entries – for class or Year groups.

Staggered Starts – Week beginning 31st August – 4th September

For schools who will be operating staggered days for individual class/year groups over the course of the first week of term. The code to apply for pupils not required to attend is #.

SIM's guidance - The # code is still added via the Exceptional Circumstances routine within SIM's and can be added for a whole class or individual pupils selected.

Children Missing Education

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify the local authority before they remove a pupil from their school admission register and record their reasons for doing so. Schools must ensure that pupils are only removed from the school roll in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006.

Removing a child from the school roll is an important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined, for the purpose of statutory guidance, under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

The regulation is that pupils can be removed from the register if they have been continuously absent for a period of 20 days or more but only **(if the whereabouts of the child/ family cannot be confirmed)**. The school should only do this after consulting the Children Missing Education team and Education Welfare Service, as the school and local authority are required to make reasonable enquiries to locate pupils before removing them from the register Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

A referral to CME must be completed:

- If you believe the child and family no longer reside at the address and you do not know their current residence then a CME referral should be made to the central mailbox CME@liverpool.gov.uk using the CME referral form. Schools need to ensure all sections of the form are completed in full and all necessary enquires are made prior to the referral.
- If a school make a referral and then subsequently locate the family please inform the CME Team that the pupil has been found.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parental rights and responsibilities

A parent can opt to electively home educate at any stage in a child's life up to the end of compulsory school age.

Other than in the case of a pupil with a statement or an Education Health Care Plan, there is no requirement for a parent to seek approval to home-school nor are they under any obligation to respond to requests for either information or a meeting with the local authority (though government documents advise that it would be sensible for them to do so).

Withdrawing a pupil from school

Ideally a parent will anticipate possible withdrawal and enter into a dialogue with their child's school about the possibility of electively home-educating. These contacts should be constructive and positive wherever possible. If parents are considering EHE as an option when schools fully open in the autumn term, we recommend they are signposted to the local authority EHE team for advice and guidance at the pre-withdrawal stage.

A parent opting to educate at home must give the school written notification that the pupil is being withdrawn. This information should be retained by the school and a copy submitted to the local authority EHE Team.

Notification by Headteachers of a Parent's decisions to Home Educate

Sections 8(1) (d) and 13(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations

2006 places a duty on headteachers to inform the LA when a parent notifies

The school of their decision to home educate.

The school, not the parent, has a legal duty to notify the local authority when deleting a child from roll on the basis of EHE.

The Headteacher should inform the LA prior to removing the child from the

school's register.

Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance. If the child is registered at a school as a result of a School Attendance Order, the parent must obtain the permission of the LA on the grounds that arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable education otherwise than at school, before the child can be removed from the school's register and educated at home.

If EHE is considered unsuitable, the expectation is that the child will return to their former school, be reallocated a new school via the Fair Access Panel or through the statutory Education, Health & Care Plan arrangements.

School should not remove a child from roll for EHE if any safeguarding concerns have been raised or concerns exist. It is important for schools when completing the EHE1 Referral Form all concerns are referenced.

On being withdrawn the school deletes the pupils from the admission and attendance registers (Regulation 8(1) Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006. ***If, however, the pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)/statement the school must inform the local authority before the child can be deleted from the roll. The local authority will then call a review of EHCP/Statement to ensure the EHE provision is suitable to the child's particular needs.***

Schools must complete the EHE1 referral document and submit it to central mailbox at EHE@liverpool.gov.uk

Attendance of vulnerable pupils

Poor school attendance is often one of the indicators in identifying where a pupil may be at risk. Schools play a vital role in ensuring pupils are not at risk of significant harm.

All Settings should always follow their local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Schools must follow their graduated response for all absent pupils as defined in the school's attendance policy. Schools should have a priority contact list of pupils who are identified as vulnerable to ensure their safeguarding and wellbeing at the earliest opportunity.

It is particularly important that early action is taken for those pupils who are vulnerable, such as those on a Child Protection Plan, Looked After Children, pupils with additional educational needs and those who are known to be at risk of exploitation and where there are any other safeguarding concerns. Action to account for any unknown absence within this cohort of children must be taken on a daily basis.

In keeping with previous guidance to schools and depending on the needs of the child and family, historic concerns and the age and additional vulnerability of the child, school safeguarding teams may wish to consider the following actions:

- If the child has a social worker then you should always speak directly to the social worker (or manager) and agree what further steps need to be taken. It is important to establish when the social worker last spoke to the child and family. Send a text from a school phone to any mobile numbers in the household and also the landline. The text should request the family contact an assigned school phone number.
- From a school account, send an email to any email address linked to the family. The email should request the family contact an assigned school phone number.
- Deliver a letter to the family address asking them to contact an assigned school phone number.
- Contact other key agencies that are working with the family to establish if they have had any contact e.g. Health Visitor.
- Phone and text the emergency contacts for the family (friends/relative/neighbour).
- Seek further advice from Early Help Hub, link Education Welfare Officer, School Improvement Liverpool safeguarding@si.liverpool.gov.uk
- Risk assess the situation with other key agencies and consider the need for a home visit particularly ***for any child who by virtue of their age, disability, health or other complex needs could be left unprotected if a parent or carer was suddenly incapacitated due to a medical emergency***. If the child has a social worker then the home visit, if needed, will most likely be undertaken by them. Where there is **no** social worker, the home visit could be undertaken by any appropriate agency who is currently working with the family and part of the 'team around the family'.
- Any home visit undertaken by school staff should be agreed with your line manager/headteacher and done safely by following the requirements for social distancing. We would recommend staff do not enter the property. All requirements in relation to home visiting families should be kept under review by schools. A home visit is best undertaken when you would normally expect the family to be at home.
- If after working with other agencies you have not been able to establish that a vulnerable child is being protected, then you should discuss with children's services the need to contact the police particularly if you believe ***a child who by virtue of their age, disability, health or other complex needs could be left unprotected if a parent or carer was suddenly incapacitated due to a medical emergency***. You will need to explain to the police the steps agencies have taken so far and the specific vulnerabilities of the child and home circumstances. When ringing the police, you should state: *I have been unable to establish the welfare of child X and I need to report them 'missing'*. Your school records should indicate when the child was subsequently seen 'safe and well' and you should escalate your concerns daily until this is achieved.

Alternative Provision

It is the government's intention that all pupils in alternative provision settings (including pupil referral units), AP academies and AP free schools) will return to school full-time from the start of the autumn term. Where a child routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, for example because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and an alternative provision setting or special school, schools should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the child.