



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2024

Designated Attendance Lead: J. Griffin
Attendance Officer: A. Pimblett

Date: 17/09/2024

Review Schedule: Every 3 years



St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School Mission Statement

*Love, Learn, Believe, Achieve
in the spirit of Jesus*

At St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School we celebrate the individual differences and gifts that God has blessed each and every one of us with.

"The mission of schools ... is to develop an understanding of all that is true, good and beautiful."

"An inclusive education finds a place for all."

"Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life." (Pope Francis)

We believe each new day brings the opportunity to express our love for God and one another. We provide a supportive, yet challenging, learning environment where each individual is able to develop their abilities and gifts. Our school is a place where children and adults can express their belief in God; develop belief in themselves and others. We believe everyone in our school community can achieve, whatever their ability. Each achievement is as unique as each individual and all are celebrated. We aspire to equip all in our school community to proclaim the Good News and "live life to the full".

1.0 Introduction

St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment. To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Parents/carers should aim for their children attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

At St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School, we believe school staff, parents, carers, pupils and all members of the school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality, ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

2.0 Aims

- Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below).
- Provide support, advice and guidance for parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure there is a proactive whole school approach that embeds a consistency of practice.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils. To help us all focus on this, St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School will ensure:

- there is a designated senior leader for championing and improving attendance;
- effective strategies are in place to deter poor punctuality;
- an engaging curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly;
- high quality teaching and learning is delivered throughout the school;
- pupils are provided with appropriate support from school and partner agencies to minimise disaffection from school;
- vulnerable groups are provided with effective support at the earliest opportunity and attendance is monitored rigorously;
- effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided;
- parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day response, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required;
- good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual pupil incentives;
- attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies;
- staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late, email into enquires or complete the absence form on Parent App.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours and confirmation of the appointment is provided.
- Contact school, preferably by 8.30 am, on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school. Please tell us why your child is ill e.g. vomiting, chest infection etc.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact Anne Pimblett (Attendance Officer and Pastoral HLTA) or Kirsty Palmer (SENCO) if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of three emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Head Teacher and can only be authorised by the Head Teacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for **short** absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Leave of Absence Forms can be requested from the school office.

3.2 If a pupil is absent we will:

- Telephone or message the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.30 am.
- If no response is received, the absence is unauthorised. A member of school staff will ring the other people on the emergency contact list. If there is still no response and the child has less than 90% attendance or is known to other services, a home visit will be conducted. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Attendance Officer and/or the Head Teacher.
- If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting and the pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence the parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning letter in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct and in agreement with the EWO.
- If absences persist the Attendance Officer will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School has to legally record every absence. This is why it is important that parents/carers directly inform school regarding the reason for absence, on the first day of absence.

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence – the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents/carers who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent/carer's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents/carers keeping their children off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings.
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive after the close of registration.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

4.3 Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact Anne Pimblett the Attendance Officer in the first instance.
- Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the Department for Education (DfE). This cohort of pupils are a priority group for St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support you to improve your child's attendance. It is essential that parents/carers work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school.

5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off school often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence from school, without a good reason is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

6.0 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carers, advice on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists, the EWO will be required to consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

8.0 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence. The first part of the school day is when the timetable for the day is shared with the

children. It is also when the children are heard read and take part in their phonics lessons. If they are late they are missing out on one of the most important parts of the day.

8.1 How we manage lateness

To ease congestion around the school site and to help parents/carers:

- Reception doors are open between 8.40am and 8.55am.
- Year 1 and Year 2 doors are open between 8.45am and 8.55am.
- The school day starts and registers are taken at 9am by the class teacher and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time.
- If a pupil arrives late to school parents/carers will need to bring them through the main entrance and enter a reason for lateness on the electronic entry system. This will be recorded as 'L'.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers (at 9.30am) is classified as an absence and will be recorded as 'U'. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.
- If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact Anne Pimblett (Attendance Officer) who will offer support to resolve the problem.

9.0 People Responsible for Attendance Matters at St. Paul & St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

10.0 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- School must complete an Exit form and submit to the CME@liverpool.gov.uk inbox
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school, we ask that you:

- Give the Attendance Officer (Anne Pimblett) comprehensive information about your plans; including any date of a move, your new address and telephone number, your child's new school and the start date; when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If your child leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing education*. This requires schools and local authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Appendices

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

Whole School Approach

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Parents/Carers Pupils	To ease congestion around the school site: • 8.30am – doors open for early morning phonics intervention • 8.40am – doors open for Reception • 8.45am – doors open for Key Stage 1 • 8.55am – doors close and the school day starts • 9.00am – registration for all classes
	Class Teacher	• Registers are completed each day on time • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class • Monitor pupils returning to school after absence • Welcome long-term absentees back into the class • Alert Attendance Officer to any concerns regarding lateness or absence
	Attendance Officer and Office Staff	• Ensure staff have completed AM/PM registers • Ensure input of accurate attendance marks in the register via Arbor • Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (before 9.30am) • Information to be logged on Arbor: voicemails, Parent Apps messages and emails regarding student absences • Ensure all late arriving pupils are signed in on Inventory (Electronic Entry System), their attendance is entered on Arbor and parent/carer is spoken to • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no form/phone call/email has been received • Logging attendance of all pupils going out during the school day for visits, medical or dental appointments • Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure attendance – any absence without reason will be followed up through the First Day Response system • SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required • Daily Late process, log as 'L' if child arrives after registration and alert Attendance Officer
	Attendance Officer	• Monitor daily attendance and punctuality • Support staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the class teachers.
	EWO	• Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.
	Designated Attendance Lead	• Monitoring of attendance and safeguarding systems • Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Class Teachers regarding support work with identified pupils and parents/carers • Termly Attendance Reports to governing Body

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	• Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their class current attendance • Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by contacting parent/carers where appropriate
	Attendance Officer	• Inform SLT and EWO of pupil patterns of absence • Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for DAL, assembly and newsletter • Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils' parent/carers • Recognition – class trophy and termly certificates • Discuss any weekly punctuality issues with the class teacher • Provide weekly punctuality data for the DAL and class teacher
	Designated Attendance Lead HLTA for intervention	• Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with safeguarding requirements • Liaison with EWO, Pastoral Staff and Class Teachers regarding support work with identified pupils • Organise help for pupils to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	Designated Attendance Lead	• Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement • Use attendance data to identify and act to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils • Ensure that all teaching staff account for attendance in planning and pedagogy • Determine priority actions for the next half term

TERMLY	Designated Attendance Lead Attendance Officer	• The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off-site provision • School Attendance Review alongside the EWO • Ensure that attendance features in ALL pupil progress and welfare meetings • Monitor and track attendance Severe and Persistent Absence Action Plans • Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other pupils causing concern • Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to improve attendance • Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively • Report to SLT on attendance matters • Ensure school prospectus and school newsletters promote Attendance • Determine priority actions for the next term
	Headteacher	• Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors

Table of Escalation of Interventions

Attendance %	RAG	Intervention	Lead Responsibility
100% - 99% Attendance is excellent.		Termly certificates and letters home.	Attendance Officer
98% - 97% Attendance is good.		Termly certificates and letters home.	Attendance Officer
96% - 94% Attendance is a concern.		Attendance drops below 97% - return to school discussions. Meeting 1 – Support.	Class Teachers and Attendance Officer and DAL
93% - 90% Attendance is a concern. Heading towards Persistent Absence.		Attendance drops below 94% - return to school discussions and persistent absence warning letter. Meeting 2 – Support. Safe and well safeguarding visit.	Attendance Officer and EWO
89% - 80% Attendance is a serious concern. Persistent Absence.		Attendance drops below 90% - return to school discussions and persistent absence letter. Meeting 3 – Challenge. Action Plan – Legal Action. Safe and well safeguarding visit.	Attendance Officer and EWO
79% - 50% Attendance is a serious concern. Heading towards Severe Absence.		Attendance drops below 80% - return to school discussions and severe absence warning letter. Regular Action Plan Meetings. Legal Action. Safe and well safeguarding visit.	Attendance Officer and EWO
49% & below Attendance is extremely concerning. Severe Absence.		Attendance drops below 50% - return to school discussions and severe absence letter. Regular Action Plan Meetings. Legal Action. Safe and well safeguarding visit.	Attendance Officer and EWO