

# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Date: June 2022

Review Date: June 2025

# St Patrick's Primary School

## Attendance Policy

*We strive for excellence within a caring and diverse community, nurturing the Catholic faith, respecting each other, living, working and growing together as part of God's family.*

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### **Statement of Intent**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School aims to encourage and support all pupils to achieve excellent standards of attendance and punctuality.

This is so that;-

- All pupils can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in the school.
- Children are able to create and maintain good relationships with other pupils and adults within the school community, thus developing their social skills and enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
- The school is able to effectively safeguard all members of the school community.
- Pupils learn good attendance and punctuality habits which will enable them to be successful in secondary and further education and in the workplace.

### **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parents**

##### Rights

- Parents have the right to be kept fully informed of their child's attendance/ punctuality record
- Parents can expect support from the school if they are finding it difficult to get their child to attend regularly or be on time.

##### Responsibilities

- Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Parents are also responsible for contacting the school, by telephone, letter or in person, to report their child's absence and the reason for it. This should be done on the first day of absence and again if absence is longer than three days.
- Parents must ensure that all holidays are taken during school holiday periods and not in term time.
- Parents must ensure that all contact details are kept up to date.

#### **St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

##### The school has a responsibility to:-

- Maintain clear records of attendance and punctuality and investigate any unexplained absenteeism.

- Encourage, support and reward high standards of attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- Work closely with parents to support them with any difficulties they may have relating to attendance or punctuality.
- Refer any issues relating to attendance and punctuality that give cause for concern to the Education Welfare Service.

### **Key Staff**

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for school attendance.
- The office manager maintains all records and is the first point of contact for parents in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- The school has a designated Education Welfare Officer who is not based at the school but who visits regularly. The EWO may also conduct home visits.

### **Registration**

#### Why do we register?

Registers are legal documents and schools are required to call the register twice a day.

If a child is persistently absent, or persistently late after the registers have closed, the adult with parental responsibility can be prosecuted under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. If this were to happen, the attendance register would be required in court as the main source of evidence.

Registers are also important for health and safety reasons. If the school has to evacuate the building, the attendance register enables school staff to account for everyone present that day.

Registers also enable the school to safeguard the well being of pupils, particularly if they travel to and from school independently.

#### The Registration Process

- School starts at 8.55am.
- The school has a Breakfast Club which starts at 8.00am for parents/ carers who require childcare in the mornings.
- The children are expected to enter the playground through the gates via Stoneydown Park and line up with their class when the teacher on duty rings the bell. A member of staff will be on duty in the playground from 8.45am.
- Children arriving to school later than 9.05am will not be able to enter the school through the gates on Stoneydown Park and will need to come to the main office. There, they will meet the Office Manager who will ask for an explanation. Parents will need to sign their child into the late book.
- The register will record an unauthorised absence for the morning session if they arrive after 9:25am. This will mean that although the child is in school they will miss their registration mark for that session. This will affect their overall attendance percentage.

- The register is called again after the lunchtime break.

### **First Day Calling**

- In order to safeguard all children, the school will contact the parents/guardians of all pupils who are absent each day and for whom no message has been received, via the school text messaging service.
- This practice enables us to ensure that all children are safe and that the register can be coded correctly.
- This safeguarding practice can only be effective if the school has up-to-date contact details for those with parental responsibility for each child. Therefore it is essential that parents/guardians ensure the school has the information it needs to carry out its role effectively.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

In every instance when a child is absent from school, the school makes a decision as to whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

A letter from home explaining an absence **does not** necessarily mean that it is **authorised** by the school.

#### **Examples of absences that the school *will authorise* include:-**

- Sickness
- **Unavoidable** medical appointments
- Interviews or entrance exams for secondary schools
- Exceptional Circumstances as authorised by the Head Teacher

#### **Examples of absences which the school *will not authorise* include:**

- Shopping for new school shoes
- Birthday treats
- Waiting in for the gas man
- Holidays/trips taken in term time. All unauthorised holidays will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued. Please see the Borough website for the cost of the FPN.
- Having your hair done for a special occasion

### **Taking Children off the School Roll.**

Extended periods of absence could result in a child's name being taken off the school roll and the place filled by a child on the school's waiting list.

The school may remove names from the school roll at the direction of the school's designated Education Welfare Officer.

### **Leaving the Site during the School Day.**

Parents must inform the school in advance if they need to take their child out of school to attend an appointment, interview or educational activity at another venue.

It is expected that appointments other than emergency ones are booked outside of school time where possible.

The school does not permit pupils to leave school grounds until a parent or carer has signed them out at the school office.

Other than in an emergency, a letter or an appointment card must be presented at the office in order for the school to be able to authorise the absence.

### **The school will not authorise early collection for reasons such as:-**

- Seeing someone off or collecting them from the airport
- Going on holiday early
- Going to birthday parties, weddings and other celebrations

If the child is returning from an appointment in time to take a school lunch, this must be booked before 10.30am that day.

Children returning to the school must report to the office to be signed in before they return to class.

### **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

The Office Manager analyses the attendance data weekly to identify pupils falling below 90% attendance, emerging patterns of absence or lateness.

Parents are kept regularly informed of any relevant attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have.

As a result of this monitoring, individual cases may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Headteacher provides the Governing Body with a termly report on attendance and punctuality.

The school provides the Local Authority with attendance data on a half termly basis and the Department of Education on an annual basis.

### **Promoting and Rewarding High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School works hard to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality. Strategies include:-

- Regularly reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is exciting and stimulating making pupils eager to come to school.
- Maintaining a display next to the school hall which shows how each class is doing against the school's attendance target.
- Presenting a certificate to the class with the highest attendance each week in assembly and publishing the winners in the weekly newsletter.
- Presenting individual awards to those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance over each term and those who have greatly improved their attendance/punctuality.

- Including guidance, advice and information about attendance and punctuality on a regular basis in newsletters.
- Reporting on a child's attendance and punctuality at each parents evening and in the end of year written report to parents.
- Sending letters to the parents/guardians of all pupils whose attendance falls below 90% in order to alert them of this downward attendance trend.
- Holding well structured meetings with parents/guardians and the Education Welfare Officer to support improved attendance and any returns to school following extended periods of absence.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School on

Date .....

Signed .....

(Chair of Governors)



## **Appendix 1 - Guidance to Staff on Attendance and Punctuality Matters.**

### **1) The role of SEAL and PHSE in securing good attendance and punctuality.**

To promote good attendance and punctuality, school staff should;-

- Regularly review the curriculum offered in an attempt to make it as topical, exciting and fun as possible so that pupils want to come to school and join in.
- Work hard to create a welcoming and positive school ethos where children feel safe, settled and valued.

### **2) The roles and responsibilities of Classteachers and TAs**

The member of staff in charge of the class at the beginning of each session should;-

- Call the register promptly and any absence notes are returned to the office.
- Communicate any concerns or observations about emerging patterns of absence or lateness to the Office Manager.
- Apply this policy consistently and fairly to all members of the school community.
- Reflect high standards in their own attendance and punctuality practice.

### **4) Confidentiality**

- ☐ Issues surrounding attendance and punctuality can sometimes be of a sensitive or distressing nature. All school staff should maintain the highest level of confidentiality when dealing with such issues.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Parents Consultations**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School aims to encourage and support all pupils to achieve excellent standards of attendance and punctuality. We recognise it is important to report on a child's attendance and punctuality at each parents' consultation meeting. Your child's class teacher will inform you of your child's attendance and punctuality details.

### REMEMBER .....

- A year has 365 days, 52 weeks and 12 months
- A school year has 195 days, 39 weeks and six terms
- Five days in each school year are training days for teachers (INSET days)
- Pupils attend school therefore for 190 days
- A school day is divided into two sessions. A pupil therefore should attend for 380 sessions

### REMINDER .....

☒	1 day off	=	99.5% attendance
☒	10 days off	=	94.7% attendance
☒	20 days off	=	90% attendance (4 whole weeks off school)