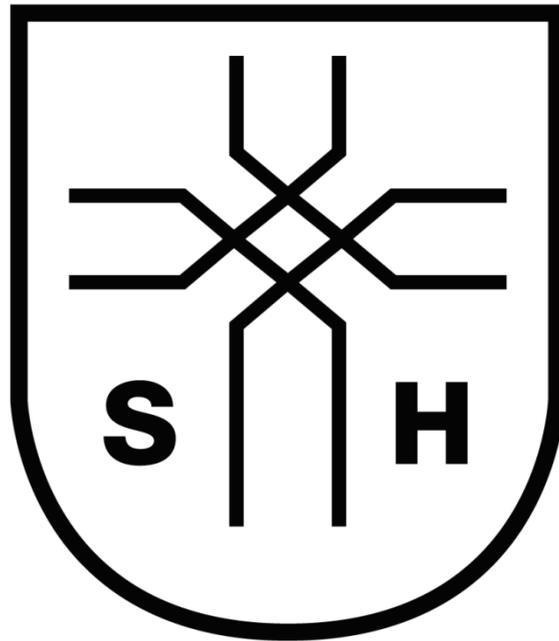


Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date approved	November 2019
Date of next review	November 2020

Equality Act Statement:

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Please refer to St John the Baptist Multi Academy Trust Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School we strive for success and every student plays a part in achieving this. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to aspire to excellence. Full school attendance is vital for our children's educational progress. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education they must attend school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

In accordance with the Local Authority all parents and carers are to ensure that their children attend school to achieve their maximum potential. Following a change in Government legislation June 2013 the school is no longer authorised to allow any leave except in **exceptional circumstances** which are agreed by the Head teacher.

As a RRS (Rights Respecting School UNICEF) this policy upholds the following articles from the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child):

Article 19 Every child has a right to be protected from harm and to be kept safe.

Article 28 Every child has a right to an education.

Article 29 Every child has the right to be the best they can.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

To promote regular attendance: - Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. (We will ask you to provide evidence of these appointments).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the registration has closed;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period in any 8 school weeks and there is usually more than one instance (up to 3 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year).
- A single unauthorised absence event contributing to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period in any 8 school weeks;
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or more (**registers close at 9.10am**);
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification contribute to a cumulative unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more over a period in any 8 school weeks;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service if attendance falls below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Peterborough City Council Attendance Service, Bayard Place, Peterborough.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Application for Leave of Absence in Term Time:

Taking leave of absence in term time without exceptional/unavoidable circumstances will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time; this time will not be authorised. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence.

It is important that you understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional/unavoidable circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause;

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

The Law relating to attendance

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 suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Signed: Printed

Child's Name: Class: