

# St Antony's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

*Learning together  
in  
God's love*

Agreed by staff: Autumn 2014  
Agreed by governors: Autumn 2014  
Review date: Autumn 2016

## St. Antony's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy

### Our Mission Statement

At St. Antony's Catholic School we celebrate our special talents as children of God:

- We try to be like Jesus and always keep him in our hearts.
- We work together in our homes, school and parish to share our gifts and learn together.
- We understand that we are all different but we respect each other.
- We look after our world so that we may share it together in peace.

### General

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's learning and regular absences will seriously affect their learning in the long term. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular and punctual attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school on a fortnightly basis to monitor attendance and punctuality. All absence other than sickness has to be authorised by the Head Teacher or Governing Body.

### Attendance

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), 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 causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

These include:

- 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 too late to get marked in the register at the prescribed time
- Absences for shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absences for day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed or sanctioned by the school.

Whilst any child may be off 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 and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is not appropriate to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

## 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 and can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage further absences.

The school day starts at **9.00am** and we expect your child to be in the playground by or **before 8.50am** to ensure they are on time. If your child is late, they will not be able to enter their class via the playground as the gates are locked for health, safety and security reasons at **8.55am** promptly. Your child will need to enter the school using the main entrance/office on Shipman Road and will be given a late mark. Registers are marked and returned to the office between **9.05 and 9:15am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are in after **9am**.

At **9.15am** 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 is a 'U' code which means after registers closed. 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 the EWO and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time or speak to the Learning Mentor.

## Late collection after school

School finishes at **3.15pm** and children should be collected promptly.

Children remain in the playground until 3.20pm to be collected. When the gates are locked for security reasons at **3:30pm** late children who have not been picked up will have been taken under the supervision of designated staff for late pick up. We will telephone you to ascertain why your child has not been collected on time. A record of children collected late after school is maintained. We recognise that sometimes there are genuine reasons for late collection, however if your child is collected late on a regular basis the following action will be taken:

- After five late collections a letter will be sent by the Attendance Officer
- After ten late collections a letter will be sent by the Head Teacher
- Any further late collection will result in an appointment with the Head Teacher
- Persistent, continued late collection may result in a referral to Social Services
- Children not collected by **5.00pm** may be taken to the police station/Social Services

## Late collection following after school clubs

After school clubs finish at **4.30pm** and children should be collected promptly from St. Anne's or by the access door next to the main office entrance as is the practise. Children to be collected will remain in these secure areas until **4.40pm** when the gates will again be locked for security reasons. Children remaining after **4:40pm** are then brought to the inclusion room under the supervision of designated staff/Senior Leadership. We will telephone you to ascertain why your child has not been collected on time. A record of children collected late after school is maintained. We recognise that sometimes there are genuine reasons for late collection, however if your child is collected late on a regular basis the following action will be taken:

- After five late collections a letter will be sent by the Attendance Officer
- After ten late collections a letter will be sent by the Head Teacher
- Any further late collection will result in an appointment with the Head Teacher and the possible loss of the club place.
- Persistent, continued late collection may result in a referral to Social Services
- Children not collected by **5.30pm** may be taken to the police station/Social Services

## **Sickness**

If children are sick a covering note should be sent on their return, explaining the reason. It helps greatly if the school is informed by telephone why your child is absent if they are going to be off for more than one or two days.

Whenever possible hospital/doctors' appointments should be arranged outside school hours. If this is impossible, children should be collected and returned to the School Office. We need to know in advance if your child is attending an appointment of any kind.

## **Leave of absence in term time**

Taking leave of absence in term time 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. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking an absence 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 must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school also based on child having 95% attendance or better from the previous academic year. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us include:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as an absence.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. Periods of unauthorised absence are required to be reported to the Governors and DCSF. In addition an Educational Welfare Officer will investigate very low attendance or repeated unauthorised absence which may result in sanctions such as warning letters from the EWO (EWS); prosecution in Magistrates Court and loss of your child's place in school after a certain period.

## **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs Angela Moore – Head Teacher

Mrs Ana McDonagh – Attendance Officer

Ms Julina Johnrose – Learning Mentor