

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

A Voluntary Academy

Attendance Policy

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| Name of School | St Augustine's Catholic Primary School |
| Address and Postcode | Conwy Court, Castlefields, Runcorn WA7 2JJ |
| Phone Number | 01928 568936 |
| Email address for this policy | schooloffice@staugustines-runcorn.com |
| Weblink for this policy | https://www.st-augustines.halton.sch.uk/policies/ |
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| Review date | September 2025 |
| Signed - Headteacher | |
| Signed – Chair of governing body | |

Aims

- To support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- To ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

This policy has been devised in consultation with Staff, Governors, Children and Parents.

Being at School

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/Carers and the school staff work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted upon promptly.

Promoting regular Attendance

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.

To help us all focus on this, school will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes the school and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, 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 contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular 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.

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.

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of pupils attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when no message has been received regarding a child's absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents (medical evidence may be required).
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality, especially for pupils whose attendance drops below 96%.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

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.
- If late, sign your child into school on arrival and state a valid reason for lateness
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school by 9:30am 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.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- 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 two emergency contact details be provided)
- Appointment cards/slips will be provided by parents as proof if there is no alternative but to book in school time, e.g if a specific clinic runs in school hours
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Head and can only be authorised by the Head. 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. Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception.
- Meet with the Head to discuss taking their child out of school in term time and the process that will be followed as part of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve difficulties which may affect regular school attendance.

If a pupil is absent we will

- Telephone and text 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 and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. 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 EWO and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- If absences persist the Head and School Attendance Clerk will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

Understanding types of Absence

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Nursery has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

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's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. St Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Nursery 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. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

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 the school office in the first instance, where they will be sign posted to a relevant member of staff

Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning.

Pupils who have time off 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 without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness:

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that child's learning and to that of the other pupils in class. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

The end of the school day is also just as important that your child is picked up on time - 3:15pm Nursery to Year 6 and 4:00pm if your child is attending an after school club.

Please phone the school immediately if you think you are going to be late.

If a different person than yourself is picking up your child, then you must contact the school in advance as your child will not be handed over until we have received parental notification.

How we manage lateness

Registration takes place at 8.50am and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late (before registers close) to school. Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as late (after registers close).

- If a pupil arrives late to school parents/carers will receive a text message/telephone call to inform them of their child's late arrival.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.
- All parents must record on the sign in system a valid reason as to why their child is late

- If pupils are late they **MUST** be brought to the main entrance and signed in by a parent or guardian

If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the school office on 01928 568936, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day:

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Evidence of medical appointments **MUST** be provided.

Request for leave:

- Holidays (which are known as a Leave of Absence) will not be Authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances which are accepted by the Head. Requests for leave during term time must be made in writing to the school office.
- If leave is taken without prior notice to the school, it will be recorded and Education Welfare will be notified.

Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

From 1 September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2016 Regulations and makes clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The School will be implementing a full range of sanctions in respect of irregular attendance which will include Penalty Notice Warning Letters and Penalty Notices. These sanctions will be used alongside Halton Borough Council's [Penalty Notice Protocol](#) which can be found online via the following link– [School Attendance](#)

Signed _____(Chair of Governors)

Attendance Management Flowchart

