

# ST. GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

### Our Mission Statement

*'With Christ at our side and St. Gerard as our guide we live, love learn and pray together'*

Reviewed: September 2022  
Next review: September 2023



## **St Gerard's Catholic Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff of Saint Gerard's Catholic School acknowledge that there is a strong link between high attendance and high attainment. Good attendance is crucial in order that a child achieves their full potential at school and accesses all that our school can offer to them.

We aim to:

- safeguard pupils and ensure they receive their entitlement to education
- improve and maintain levels of attendance consistent with established targets
- ensure there is common and consistent practice amongst staff
- raise parent and pupil awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and of the impact attendance has on achievement
- have a system of incentives and rewards which encourage individual pupils and whole classes to attend regularly

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn.

We believe that helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is a collective responsibility between parents, pupils and all members of our school staff and governors.

### **Parents [Carers] have a responsibility to:**

- ensure that their child regularly attends school and that they are only absent when their child is unwell and therefore unfit to learn, or is having a day of religious observance
- ensure they are in school punctually as lateness impacts on their child and the whole of their year group
- promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child comes to school ready to learn and with the correct equipment to participate in all lessons

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

- ensure there is a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance
- ensure there is a clear line of responsibility and a clear system for the promotion and monitoring of attendance
- monitor and evaluate attendance and identify children whose attendance causes concern.
- keep parents informed of their child's attendance level and contact parents should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- offer support to any family who is experiencing a period of difficulty, engaging external agencies if appropriate
- report to parents on their child's attendance at parents evening and through the annual school report
- celebrate good attendance by announcing class attendance winners in Monday morning assembly and displaying attendance winners on the attendance board. Promoting good individual and class attendance by awarding certificates at the end of each term.

### **The Governing Body has a responsibility to:**

- ensure that the school and staff meet legal responsibilities in relation to all pupil attendance and registration regulations
- ensure that the school is able to provide the necessary resources for the implementation of this policy
- monitor attendance via the figures published in the Head Teacher report to Governors.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school [not by parents], as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons when a child is not present in school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments (e.g. hospital or consultant) which unavoidably fall in school time or an annual religious observance.

**Unauthorised absences** are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school making a referral to ELIT (Education Legal Intervention Team)

This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- absences which have never been properly explained
- holidays in term time which will always be unauthorised

### **Arrival**

The gates open at 8:40am and children make their way to their classrooms. Gates close at 8:50am.

### **Registration**

Registration is twice each day, a day counting as two attendances, one in the morning at **8:55am** and one at the start of the afternoon session, 12:45pm for KS1 and 1:05pm for KS2.

Once the gates are closed, the children will need to enter the school via the main entrance and they will need to be signed in by a parent. They will be marked in as a 'Late' mark on the computer system [recorded as **L** on the Attendance print-out]. This shows them to be on site and present. After 9.15am, children are automatically recorded as an Unauthorised Absence [**U**], coded on the attendance print out.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher receiving vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **Managing lateness:**

If any child has a persistent record of lateness, parents are contacted by the Head Teacher to resolve the problem.

**Absence within the school day:**

Any child leaving school with a parent within school hours are required to sign out on the electronic system and the reason noted. The signing out system is used in the case of fire as an appendix to the class register.

**Illness** - The school office should be informed before 9.30am on the first day of a child's absence through illness with a proposed date of return to school. During busy periods in the office the answering machine is left on – all messages are always picked up, so parents should feel free to leave a voice message. If there is no contact from the parent, a member of our office team will contact parents on the first day of absence.

**Medical Appointments** - Every effort should be made **to arrange medical appointments outside school hours**. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child is expected to be brought to school for their registration mark and then returned to school directly after the appointment.

**Absence in term time** - There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

**Holidays in term time** – no holidays in term time can be authorised.

Parents needing exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences should make an appointment to discuss this with the Head Teacher well in advance. In all cases a Leave in Term Time Form must be completed, these are available from the school office or on the school website.

**Arrangements for absence in other circumstances**

Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be recorded on the register.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the root problem and engage the support of other external agencies as appropriate.

**Persistent Absenteeism [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 is most likely to cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this and minimise absence from school.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and we will inform parents immediately. Any child who comes in to the category of PA together with their parents, may be subject to an allocation of additional support, the School Nurse or any other appropriate resource we can offer in school such as a Mentor or Counsellor. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system as well as tracking their academic record when absence affects attainment.

As a last resort the school will take legal action against parents whose children's attendance is persistently low even with support in place- St Gerard's have adopted the Fast track system for attendance.

**[Fast track information](#)**

Any child who is in a PA category is not automatically given an authorised code when they are absent, but evidence that medical advice has been sought is requested such as a medical appointment card, prescription or the prescribed medication.

As a school we readily accept any initiative which will support and enhance the strategies we have in place in order that we achieve the best possible levels of attendance for the children in our care. We actively encourage parents to contact us when they are experiencing difficulties so that these can be quickly resolved.

School will where necessary carry out home visits; if a family are deemed vulnerable this may be straight away. Usually this will be on the second day of an unauthorised absence. If concerned for a family's safety, we will contact the police to carry out a safe and well check.

### **Attendance Targets**

We aim to achieve attendance rates in line with local and national expectations. Our targets are set annually.

### **Responsibilities**

We recognise that it is the responsibility of our whole school based team to promote attendance and punctuality but within this role, there are key duties:

- Teachers must complete the Online attendance register accurately and promptly at the designated times within the school day [8.55am & 12:45/1:05pm].
- All adults must report any concerns about a child to the Head Teacher [or Deputy in their absence], if they are made aware that their absence may be a safeguarding issue – a safe and well check can then be made.
- The Head Teacher, with the support of the administration team will monitor attendance and lates.

**Administration staff have attended Fast – Track Prosecution & Case Study Workshop Training with PAC&T Ltd.**

### **Recognition of good attendance**

**We have a number reward systems in place to encourage high attendance:**

- Weekly class attendance is put on the newsletter and website.
- A class wins the attendance cup weekly
- Certificates are given for all children who receive 100% attendance each term.
- Any child who achieves 100% for an academic year receives a special badge and certificate and a reward from the school.
- Each class share their weekly attendance in relation to the school target on their classroom door.
- One class will also win the overall attendance for the year – often a special trip.
- Rewards for attendance above 97%.

### **Summary**

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.

This policy was reviewed and formally approved by the Governing Body of Saint Gerard's Catholic School on 20/09/2022. It will be available to all staff and parents, published on the website and will be reviewed every two years unless circumstances or the government directs.