

ST ANSELM'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Learning and growing together through prayer, belief and love

This policy was approved by Pupil Committee of the Governing Body on 27th September 2022

and will be reviewed every two years



INTRODUCTION

Maximum school attendance is considered to be of the utmost importance at St Anselm's School. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities in order to reach their full educational achievement. School attendance is also a component of safeguarding children and is a responsibility of everyone. (KCSIE 2022 p9) Therefore, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We recognise that all children have the right to an education (UNCRC Article 28)

We will consistently work towards the highest possible attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting the highest level of attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we endeavour to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy sets out DfE legislation and Harrow Local Authority guidelines for school attendance and outlines our practice and procedures for maintaining a high level of pupil attendance in line with the following DfE guidance:.

- KCSIE 2022
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (Sept 2022)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Sept 2022)

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Government also expects:

- Parents to perform their legal duty to by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early; and
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Legal Enforcement by Harrow Local Authority

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality, Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. Harrow Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for schools, parents/carers and other interested parties. Harrow Council will also be conducting Pre-Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984. The Harrow Attendance Guidance and Resources (pack) provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action which is called Attendance Intervention Model (AIM).

We review our systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that we are achieving our set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet attendance targets. In order for the school to have the optimum chances of contacting parents/carers, the school requests that parents provide 3 separate contacts for pupils. Therefore, we request parents/carers to supply contact details as follows:

- First parent contact - mobile, home and work place telephone numbers
- Second parent contact - mobile, home and work place telephone numbers
- Third contact – contact number for another nominated person, e.g. family member or family friend.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from all pupils:

- that they will attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- that they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day

We expect the parents/carers to:

- ensure their child/ren attend school, every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so (This policy should be read in conjunction with the school policy for pupils with Medical Needs)
- ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence, by 10:00am, when their child is unable to attend school and follow this up with a written explanation on their child's return to school
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time and well prepared for the day ahead
- contact the school whenever problems occur which may keep their child away from school
- avoid making routine appointments for the dentist, opticians and doctors during school hours
- not take family holidays during term time
- give advance notice in writing to the Headteacher should a request for absence for exceptional circumstances be necessary during term time

Parents/Carers, pupils and the Governing Body can expect the following from the school:

- a quality education which ensures a stimulating curriculum and supports the needs of all pupils

- active encouragement to ensure good attendance
- regular and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- contact with the parents/carers if a child is frequently late
- immediate action on any problem notified to us concerning attendance
- a caring environment where respect for each other is of paramount importance
- Values of the Catholic faith promoted
- A safe, secure, welcoming and caring environment for your child.

WE WILL ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- accurate register completion at the beginning of each session, twice a day
- accurate record of attendance recorded onto SIMS data base
- writing to parents/carers whose children's attendance falls to 90% or less recording of individual attendance on pupils' termly reports
- reporting of attendance figures to the Governing Body and termly to parents/carers through the Headteacher's newsletter
- Setting and maintaining school targets for attendance annually

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

1. If parent/s makes no contact by 10am on the first day of the start of a pupil's absence, the parents/carers will be contacted by text. If no response is received by 11am, a phone call will be made to parents requesting an explanation for pupil's absence. This will be followed by an email when failure to contact the parent continues on the first day of absence.
2. If absence continues and no response is received from parents/carers by 2nd day, the office will phone the 3rd contact and a further email/ letter will be sent to parents.
3. When a child's attendance falls to 94% by term two, a letter is sent home to inform parents/carers, together with a summary record of attendance, that the school has a concern about their child's attendance.
4. Children who are persistently absent will be closely monitored.
5. For pupils whom the school has a concern about (i.e. persistent absentees/pupils whose attendance is less than 90%), a letter will be sent home informing parents/ carers together with a summary record of attendance, that the school has a concern about their child's attendance. In specific cases the Head Teacher may deem it necessary to request parents/carers to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the reasons for absence. A plan of action will be agreed with a view to improving attendance.
6. If attendance does not improve, it will be necessary to complete a referral to the School Nursing Service and/or Harrow Children's Services.
7. Parents whose child(ren) are regularly late will be sent a letter asking them to ensure their child arrives on time. If there is no improvement they will be invited in to discuss this with the Headteacher.

REINTEGRATION OF LONG TERM ABSENTEES:

When a child has been absent for a long period of time it will be necessary to plan carefully for their return to school. This can be a traumatic time for child and parents/carers. The Headteacher and the SENCO together with the class teacher will work out a programme to meet the needs of the pupil. (See p4 of policy for Pupils with Medical Needs).

REGULATIONS ON TERM TIME LEAVE

As of October 2018, amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.

The amendments make it clear that Headteachers **may not grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave for exceptional circumstances is granted.

In order to ensure we meet our legal responsibilities, we must make every effort to make it clear to parents and carers that children must attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have an impact on educational attainment.

We must be able to evidence that we have done all we can to ensure the law is upheld. In law, parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure regular and punctual attendance at school. Therefore, any unauthorised absence, such as taking holiday in term time, can result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice. Fixed Penalty Notices will operate following Harrow Council's guidance. The Penalty Notice will require the payment of a fine of £60.00 within 28 days rising to £120.00 which must be paid within 42 days.

Our school is therefore no longer able to authorise absence from learning (Leave Requests) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Permission for leave from school for exceptional circumstances must be requested using the Leave Form available from the office. Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Where the parents keep a child away for longer than agreed, the extra time will also be marked as unauthorised.

ORGANISATION:

In order for this policy to be successful every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils, by their own behaviour and the importance of the education being provided. This means that all staff should arrive in school punctually, begin each session on time and always be well prepared. In addition to this there are the following specific responsibilities: -

Headteacher:

- To oversee the whole policy and practice
- Meet regularly with the school secretary for updates on pupil attendance
- To report to Governors and the LA/DfE as required

Teachers:

- To complete SIMs attendance registers accurately according to the guidelines provided
- To inform the school secretary of any concerns regarding attendance
- To ensure that registers are completed and closed by 9.05am in the morning and 12.50pm (EYFS & KS1) and 1.30pm (KS2) in the afternoon.

Office Staff:

- To closely monitor and evaluate attendance (and punctuality)
- To communicate with teachers over the maintaining of registers and other attendance issues
- To manage the SIMs attendance module and provide attendance data from SIMs when required
- To monitor attendance issues on a regular basis
- To communicate with pupils and parents/carers over attendance (and punctuality issues)

- To provide letters to the teachers (to send home to parents/carers) in cases where there is an unexplained absence
- To provide accurate information on attendance for the headteacher to use as above.
- To meet, or have contact, with the Harrow School Nursing Service and/or Safeguarding Education Lead to monitor attendance and related issues
- To provide termly and annual summary printouts of attendance, as required.
- To record children arriving late and after the close of registration
- To enter late arrivals onto SIMs
- To keep a record of children leaving or returning to the premises during the day other than at the usual times
- To take the late/in/out book to the playground in the event of an emergency evacuation in line with procedures

Attendance Policy - Appendix 1

Guidelines for completion of registers

1. The school uses SIMS registration.
2. Registration takes place twice a day - at 8.55 am and 12.50 pm (EYFS & KS1) and 1.30pm (KS2)
3. The register is completed by a teacher.
4. Registers are legal documents and must be completed at the correct time each day.
5. Children should be marked present or absent, as the case may be, in the manner described in the register guidelines.
6. Punctuality - Children are marked late if they arrive after 9.00 and L marked on the register.
7. Other codes are found in SIMS
8. The registers will be monitored on a weekly basis by the school office.

Attendance Policy – Appendix 2

Penalty Notices

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force October 2017

The **2007 regulations** set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

Amendments to 2007 regulations reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, as of **October 2017**, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions

A Penalty Notice can be issued if there is:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absence within a 12 week period
- At least 8 unauthorised late marks within a 10-week period
- A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) not approved by the Head teacher as exceptional.

The LA may take legal action against any parents or guardians who fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis and the governors agree to provide any evidence required to support this process. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.