

St. Anthony's School

‘We Grow and Learn with Jesus’

Attendance Policy – March 2022

Children cannot learn if they are absent from school. We take attendance very seriously at St Anthony’s School as we want all children to benefit from the learning experiences available to them. Our attendance target is to ensure the whole school attendance is above 96%. We will always follow the the rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, which are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Values and Aims

We aim :

- to ensure that all our children and young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them
- to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- to create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- to demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- to maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school

Leadership & Management

The responsibilities of attendance for the Senior Management Team.

- To have a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all staff, pupils and families.
- To ensure all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and that they understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and we make sure that all pupils understand its importance.
- To convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- To ensure that attendance is an important area of school improvement.
- Make sure the area of attendance is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- A designated member of the senior management team has clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, who understands the importance of the escalation of procedures. (see School Attendance Officer).

- To ensure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- Governors will have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the implementation of the policy.
- all staff knowing and understanding their responsibilities for attendance.
- agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher and not with parents or the local authority – see Appendix A for circumstances under which an absence will be authorised.
- working actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- having clear policies in place to address persistent absence.
- ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- monitoring trends.
- implementing a system for all parents to report a child's absence.
- reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- reminding all parents of their commitment to this policy.
- building respectful relationships with all staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- communicating openly and honestly with all staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- asking the INCo to liaise with other agencies who may be working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for all staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.
- treating all pupils with dignity
- taking into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence
- handling confidential information sensitively
- understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
- communicating effectively with all families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- delivering clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through the prospectus and admission/transition events

- using physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through the monthly newsletter.
- establishing and monitoring implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness.
- monitoring implementation of policy and practice.
- monitoring whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establishing, implementing and monitoring robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education.
- developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND).
- engaging all pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions.
- ensuring that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education. See guidance on HCC Grid when a parent is considering EHE.

Role of the Teaching Staff

Teachers are responsible for:

- setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- implementing the policy.
- ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date.
- monitoring class and individual attendance patterns.
- informing the school office of any concerns.
- emphasising with children the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- building respectful relationships with all staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication in order to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

Role of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

Parents whose children are registered at St Anthony's are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. See Appendix A for information about authorised absences.

Parents are also responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- not booking holidays during term-time.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling on staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Role of School Attendance Officer (SLT)

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Head.
- monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
- robust school systems which provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as PP, FSM, VC, EAL, SEND.
- keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of all pupils and to implement attendance procedures
- compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date.
- consultations with the LAAO.
- ensuring the office staff contact parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.30 am.
- sending an email and following up by making a phonecall if no contact is made.
- arranging meetings with parents to ensure clear channels of communication are in place and offer support/interventions where necessary.

- making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a 10 Day Absence Form.

Encouraging Good Attendance

The School encourages good attendance by:

- using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences.
- making sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.
- publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body.
- awarding good attendance badges to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance.
- offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance including certificates etc.

Dealing with Lateness

The office staff monitor lateness and inform:

- the Head/SMT/teachers of patterns of lateness.
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed.
- Pupils who arrive after the entrance doors have closed and need to gain access via the office will be marked as late and parents will need to record their attendance on the electronic sign in system.
- Pupils who arrive before 9.15am will be marked as late not absent.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.15am and the parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session. (Code C).
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue by:

- establishing robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by sending letters to parents/carers or a telephone call from the Headteacher or INCo.
- engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate

Pupils who are persistently absent

At St Anthony's we will establish clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:

- local authority attendance services
- school nursing and mental health professionals
- children's social care staff where appropriate

Part-time Timetables

At St Anthony's we will send information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable. We will follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable.

Appendix A

Authorised Absences

Absences will be authorised if:

- the pupil is ill
- there is a close family bereavement.
- it is a medical appointment which cannot be made outside of school hours
- the leave of absence is to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.
- it is for a secondary school visit
- it is for an outside examination e.g. music, dance, drama

We will not authorise an absence for travel/holidays/shopping trips/birthday treats/special occasions. We would expect any of these to be organised in the school holidays.

Medical Appointments

Parents/Carers are to follow the requirements below for any medical/dental appointments:

- Please make every effort to make appointments out of school time.
- If you need to make an appointment please explain you can only attend at a time when it will not impact on your child missing education.
- If you cannot avoid a school time appointment please inform our admin staff as soon as you are notified by presenting your appointment letter, card or text to request permission to take your child out of school. Your child needs to be returned to school as soon as possible after the appointment.
- Please do not wait to inform us until the day of the appointment because it may be that you will need to wait until there is a convenient break in the lesson for your child to come out of class.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.