

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School & Nursery



Attendance Policy

Date for review of Policy – July 2019

Statement of Intent

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is celebrating success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. St Patrick's Catholic Primary School actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils.

As part of our drive to improve attendance the school monitors weekly attendance of each class. The attendance of each class is recorded in the School Newsletter. The school actively promotes the celebration of attendance.

We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Parental/carer responsibility

The responsibilities for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rest with parents/carers. To this end, it is desirable that parents/carers should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school.

It is the parents/carers responsibility to contact the school on the first day the child is absent. Parents should contact the school before 9.00am to inform the office that their child is absent. Parents should also try to inform school of further absences and any infectious diseases.

The role of the teacher

Class teachers complete an electronic register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. They identify absences and record accordingly. Registers are sent electronically to the office as soon as possible. If children are not in class by the end of the register they will be marked absent.

The role of the school secretary

All registers are completed electronically in the classrooms. Once the registers are received in the office, the absences are checked by the school secretary. All absences are checked – late book, phone messages and if no reason is found for the absence the secretary will phone the first contact to enquire for the child's absence.

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. Persistent or frequent absences may require a doctor's note. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is in regular contact with the school and will clarify whether ongoing absence is justified. If a child's absence falls below 90% the EWO will start procedures, which may result in the issuing of Penalty Notices. **It is the school that authorises absence, not the parent/carer.**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. At 8.40am the school bell is rung to signal that the children need to go straight into their classes. The gates are locked at 8.50am and all pupils arriving after 8.50am should report to the office with a parent/carer who must inform the school why their child is late.

Authorised/non authorised absence

The legal responsibility for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents/carers

It is essential that parents/carers should be the first line of contact whenever the pupil is absent from school.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to contact the school whenever a pupil is absent and on the first day of absence.

It is the school who authorises the absence, not the parent/carer.

Absence is either authorised, such as in the case of illness, religious observance etc, or unauthorised, when there is no reason given for such absence or it is considered the reason is unjustified, i.e. a longer period that would reasonably be expected, or no reasonable explanation.

Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for this offence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat attendance problems early, before they become entrenched.

Parents and children should also be supported by their school to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

Therefore, Penalty Notices and other legal sanctions will only be used where parental cooperation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will also be used as a means to support and challenge parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

Legal Framework:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

The Regulations also require each local authority to publish a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consultation with governing bodies, head teachers and the police. Guidance from the Secretary of State states that this "should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice".

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher.(e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions.

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120

The Governing Body of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School has agreed to set the following target range which runs from the beginning of the autumn term to the end of the spring:

Minimum Target allowed by the DFES 95.2%
Expected School Target for 18/19 period 95.2%

This policy will be reviewed July 2019

Signed.....Chair of Governors

Signed.....Headteacher

Date.....