



Attendance Policy

St Teresa's Catholic Academy

In all aspects of attendance, we endeavour to fulfil our Vision Statement; Safe, Happy and successful, Together with God. At St Teresa's we value education highly and expect that the children should be in school during term time. Absence and late arrivals impact detrimentally on pupil's attainment, as well as disrupting the teacher and the whole class.

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of St Teresa's Catholic Academy are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building schools which provide the best education possible for young people.

Regular attendance is key to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. We believe regular school attendance at St Teresa's Catholic Academy will instil a positive work ethic which pupils will then demonstrate throughout their working life.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Inform the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence.

School staff will:

- Provide a welcoming and safe learning environment
- Provide appropriate support for any pupil's or parent's/carer's attendance concerns
- Regularly monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested

- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- Notify the EWO after 10 days unexplained absence and after 15 days sickness absence.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Parents/carers should arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Parents/carers should complete a Leave of Absence form prior to the appointment. Pupils may be given missed class work to catch up on at home.
- Pupils must be signed out at reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.

Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to the rest of the class.

- Registration takes place at 8.55am and pupils who arrive after that will be recorded as late to school and must report to the school office before going to class.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route then this needs to be put in writing to the Head Teacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll.

School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to inspect the education put in place at home.

Leave of Absence

Requests for leave of absence in term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances as per Department of Education Guidance 2016. Requests for Leave of Absence forms are available from the school office and, where possible, must be returned **at least four weeks before the first day of the proposed absence**. Evidence of information relating to the absence, such as a wedding invitation, may be requested by the school. Parents are reminded not to book or take holidays during term time. This disrupts the continuity of learning and the children miss elements of the curriculum that they may not be able to catch up with on their return. If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare may be notified.

Penalty Notices

- The Head Teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents for excessive unauthorised absence. E.g. When pupils are taken out of school for five or more days' unauthorised holiday. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per pupil
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notices is £60 per child and per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to pay.
- In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by a Truancy Patrol or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty Notices – Criteria

The following is a list of scenarios that would usually warrant the issue of a penalty notice. This is not an exhaustive list, and other unauthorised absence scenarios could apply subject to consultation between the Head Teacher and EWO.

- Unauthorised holiday of 5 days or more in a single holiday
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed) – i.e. 10 occasions in a 10 week period
- Less than 80% attendance, the absences being unauthorised; during a 4 school week period

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

If concerns regarding attendance arise, the class teacher will be notified and in the first instance talk to the parent. Should no improvement be seen or the concerns remain, a letter will be issued to the parent/carer. Following this, if there is no improvement in school attendance, the school will refer the family to the EWO.

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

If unauthorised absence continues, Education Welfare will call a Pre-Court meeting with the aim of resolving the problem. If this meeting is unsuccessful the measure of last resort is to take parents/carers to court for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Safe, Happy and Successful together with God

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