



Much Woolton Catholic Primary School

'With Jesus we Love, Learn and Grow'

School Policy for Pupil Attendance & Punctuality

Approved by the Governing body in October 2023

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Signed _____ Head teacher

To be reviewed and revised in October 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

With Jesus we Love, Learn and Grow

To do this we will:

- Be a Christian community that follows Jesus in living out Gospel values; 'With Jesus' (Christ centred)
- Be a beacon of light that shines out to others, sharing faith, hope and love; 'Love' (Community)
- Provide opportunities for all to grow and achieve by igniting a desire for life-long learning; 'Learn and grow' (Education)

Objectives: Christ Centred

- Provide quality collective worship and enriching liturgical celebrations
- Enable our children to acquire an excellent religious education and develop their relationship with God
- Encourage a sense of justice, peace and stewardship of our global community

Objectives: Education

- Provide a stimulating curriculum that develops a passion for learning, curiosity about our world and enables children to be agents for change
- Value our pupils and staff, appreciating their uniqueness and individual talents, enabling them to be the best they can be
- Have high expectations of ourselves and others in all that we do
- Strive for all to reach their full potential by building resilience and having high aspirations

Objectives: Community

- Create a safe, happy environment where all feel valued and welcomed
- Develop positive links between the school and parish
- Recognise that each person is an extraordinary work of art
- Take an active role in the stewardship of our local and global community that enriches the lives of others

ATTENDANCE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF PERSONAL SOCIAL AND CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our school programme promotes both personal development and contribution at school, local, regional, national and global levels.

Jesus is always there; make sure you are.

ATTENDANCE IS NOT OPTIONAL:

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

At Much Woolton Catholic Primary School we recognise the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. We encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for our pupils to support learning and development.

Children who have poor school attendance are more likely to underachieve and leave school, with few, relevant qualifications. Pupils who are absent from school are more likely to become involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour or become victims of it.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important that we see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

It is vital that pupils aim to attend regularly and on time. All pupils should aim for 100% attendance with the expectation that all pupils achieve at least 97%.

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT:

- Absence is damaging: it breaks the continuity of learning and as a consequence, children miss important work and underachieve
- On returning to school, poor attenders suffer a loss of confidence due to the fact that they are unable to understand the work and that this loss of confidence can lead to attention seeking through disruptive behaviour and behavioural problems
- Poor attenders' friendship groups shrink and eventually close, leading to further isolation
- Regular attenders are affected when absentees return through the diversion of teacher time and class disruption
- Regular attenders feel irritated by the absences of poor attenders

ABOUT ATTENDANCE

- **Leave of absence:** The Education Regulations 2013 made clear that schools cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless "exceptional circumstances" exist.
- For the purposes of absences, EXCEPTIONAL has been defined as RARE, SIGNIFICANT, UNAVOIDABLE AND SHORT.
- UNAVOIDABLE has been defined as "cannot reasonably be scheduled at another time" i.e. in the 190 days, including holidays and weekends that children and families have to spend together outside of the school year.

- Therefore, if an event can reasonably be scheduled in these 190 days it will not be authorised.
- Absence during term times for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance and may result in a fine from the local authority
- Absences during term time to visit family members are also not considered exceptional circumstances.
- Partial absences for medical appointments will only be authorised on production of a valid appointment card or letter.
- Children will not be released early without a valid appointment card or in other circumstances without the permission of the headteacher.
- Early release on a regular basis will only occur with prior permission of the headteacher and the request being made by an authorised third party.
- Absences to visit an ill relative or attend a wedding of an immediate family member or a funeral are considered exceptional circumstances. Although schools are required to consider a pupil's previous record of attendance.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Only the headteacher can authorise a child's absence following guidelines set out by the Local Authority and the Department for Education. There are very few reasons why absence may be authorised and they include:

- Sickness that requires a child to stay off
- Exceptional family circumstances eg bereavement
- Medical appointment (but only for the duration of the child's appointment)

Even if authorised these will still count as absence. **If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.**

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

This is when a pupil is absent from school without the authority of the school. It's also called truancy. It may be that a child is having difficulties at school or at home. Either way, the school needs to know, because continuing non-attendance will only make the situation worse.

Parents must collaborate with the school in such instances.

Below is a list of reasons that are considered unacceptable as an excuse for non-attendance. It is not an exhaustive list and schools will consider each request for absence very carefully and on an individual basis.

- Time off for a minor ailment
- Holiday in term time
- Birthday treat or day trip out
- Oversleeping or being tired
- Waiting in for workmen or minding house
- Shopping or a visit to the hairdresser
- Taking a 'long weekend'

- Looking after a brother or sister
- Translating for a family member or friend
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Staying off because a brother or sister is off sick

FIRST DAY CONTACT is central to dealing with attendance problems at an early stage:

If there is no contact or explanation on the first day of absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent by telephone. Unsuccessful attempts to contact the home will be recorded and if there is no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. An absence will be considered as authorised if parents/carers provide an acceptable explanation by telephone, note, letter or verbal message. The reason for absence must be as specific as possible (eg. headache, eye infection rather than sick or unwell).

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)

The Educational Welfare Officer (Mrs M Mercer) provides support for parents/carers and advice on problems relating to attendance. The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be found to improve the pupil's attendance. The EWO will consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

TAKING FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Parents do not have a right in law to take their children on holiday during school term time Only in exceptional circumstances can the school grant leave of absence for a holiday to be authorised.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts their learning and that of other pupils in the class, as teachers have to constantly repeat work that has been missed.

The authorisation of any absences is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher.

Even if an absence is authorised it **still counts as an absence** and is recorded as an absence. Authorisation simply means a fixed penalty and will not be issued.

PERSISTENT ABSENCES

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department of Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. **THE DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.** Further absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical proof is provided eg. appointment card; medication label stating child's

name or a doctor's note. Parents/carers of children with more than 10% absence rate will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss an action plan to address this matter. If the actions do not lead to an improvement this may result in a referral to the local authority.

PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils can disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can lead to further absences. Our school gate opens at 8.45am and is locked at 8.55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classes by 9.05am. Children arriving late are required to go to the office where they will have to sign in using the electronic system.

PUNCTUALITY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF PERSONAL SOCIAL AND CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THE EFFECTS OF LATE ARRIVAL TO CLASS

Arriving 5 minutes late each day:

- 5 days a week = 25 minutes lost learning time a week
- 39 weeks a year = 16 hours and 15 minutes lost learning time a year
- 7 years in our school = 113 hours and 45 minutes learning time lost

WHY PUNCTUALITY IS SUCH A GOOD THING?

Being on time is a life skill. It gets your child's day off to a good start so he/she can settle straight into the school day. It sets positive patterns for the future, leads to good attendance and to better achievement. It helps children understand that school is important and education is valuable.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM GETTING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL ON TIME

If you have a problem getting your child to school on time talk to him/her. Talk to your child. Talk to the school and ask for help – remember it's better to get help early on to stop little problems from becoming big ones.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The board of governors is responsible for monitoring attendance and Mrs Emma Skyner-Andrews is the lead governor for attendance. The governors also hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

THE HEADTEACHER

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring absence data and reporting it to governors.

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LEAD

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

OFFICE STAFF

The office staff take and record calls from parents about absences in the school attendance file. They also monitor class registers and contact parents of any absent children for whom no reason has been provided. All messages and calls are then recorded on Arbor.

Early intervention is essential in maintaining good attendance and punctuality. Our aim is to work with families at the earliest possible opportunity to support them.

Our Attendance Team – Mr M White, Mrs M Wilson, Mrs P Regan, Mrs C O'Brien and Mrs J Burke

DAILY PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING AND MAINTAINING REGISTERS

Procedure	Person responsible
1. Registers must be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon lessons	Class teacher
2. On each occasion school must record whether a child was present, absent or taking part in an approved educational / sporting activity	Class teacher
3. Pupils will only be marked as present if they are in the room when the register is taken	Class teacher
4. Details of times for the above: ❖ 8.55am Registration ❖ 9.30am Registers close and any child arriving after this time will be recorded as being absent for the session ❖ 13.05pm EYFS and KS1 PM registration; 13.20pm KS2 registration	Class teacher
5. Registers checked and recorded in main school office	Mrs C. O'Brien Mrs J Burke (office staff) Mrs M Wilson (Head of school) Mrs Regan (Attendance lead)

ATTENDANCE CODES	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence

S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances