

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Attendance Policy September 2021

Here in St. Cuthbert's, where every aspect of school life is built upon Gospel values, we seek to create an atmosphere, supported through prayer and worship, whereby everyone who has an interest in our community can feel valued and believe their happiness is pursuit of all, as we grow closer to Jesus Christ.

Through a curriculum that supports the holistic development of each child, by encouraging them to reach their full potential, we will maintain a high quality education within the resources available. We will seek to develop the necessary partnership links with home and parish so that all are able to participate as members in the wider community.

Introduction

Our school's Attendance Policy is part of the school's well being system. A good education is every child's right and provides the best possible start in life. Good attendance and punctuality are crucial if children are to keep up with their work. Good habits are formed in primary school and work opportunities in life will be difficult if children have not attended school regularly and on time.

Aim

To promote high rates of attendance and punctuality, in order to provide each child with every opportunity to access the curriculum, to which they are entitled, to raise their achievement.

Guidance

At St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School, we monitor both attendance and punctuality very carefully as we want to make sure we give every child the best start in life. We can do this with your support by making sure children understand the importance of being at school regularly and on time.

Parents/Carers are requested to ring into school if their child is not well enough to attend. The school operates a first day response system, which means that a member of staff will ring parents/carers if their child is not in by close of registration and we have not been notified. This is to ensure the safety and well being of all children in our care and also provide reassurance to our parents that your child has arrived safely at school.

Parents/Carers must sign their children in and out if they come to or leave school at times other than normal start and finish times.

From 1st September 2013, DFE amended the regulations surrounding holidays in term time. The DFE has removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These make it clear that the Headteacher **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time

unless there are exceptional circumstances and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. From 1st September 2013 applications for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the **Headteacher** must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Exceptional circumstances are those that cannot be changed and are beyond parents/carers' control e.g. close family bereavement, appointment for visa renewal or residency application, religious observance.

Procedural Guidelines from 1st September 2013

Parents/Carers

- Leave of absence must be formally requested from and agreed by the **Headteacher** in advance of any absence. Retrospective requests will not be agreed.
- **Headteachers** may not grant any leave of absence unless they are satisfied there are exceptional circumstances
- Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not deemed to be exceptional circumstance
- **Headteachers** will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted, in accordance with arrangements made by the school's governing body
- The Local Authority can fine parents/carers for failing to ensure their child attends school.

If it is an exceptional circumstance

- Discuss the reason with the Headteacher
- Ensure your child returns to school promptly at the end of the leave period determined by the Headteacher

What the School will do

- The school will ensure that parents are informed well in advance of all school holiday dates
- The school will work in partnership with travel agents to offer holiday discount vouchers to parents booking holidays during statutory holidays
- If the request for leave of absence is granted, the school will write to the parents/carers confirming that leave has been authorised, the start and end dates and the consequences as to what action will be taken if they fail to return to school by the given date
- If parents insist on taking children on holiday during term time, then the pupil will be registered as absent without authorisation. This may result in a fine in accordance with local authority procedures.
- The school will work in partnership with the Attendance Team to raise levels of attendance
- The Headteacher will notify the school's Local Authority Attendance Development Officer of all unauthorised absences
- When necessary, appropriate action will be taken by the School Attendance Development Officer

Monitoring

- The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring daily/weekly attendance and all individual requests for leave of absence
- The school operates a first day contact policy and will make every endeavor to contact parents. If parents don't respond the Attendance Officer will be contacted after three days
- Where vulnerable pupils are concerned, the Attendance Officer will be contacted on the first day of absence if it has been impossible to contact parents/carers
- The school will work closely with the Attendance Officer for any 'missing' children and with both the Attendance Officer and other settings for any child accessing alternative provision
- Each half term office staff will print each child's attendance and this will be monitored in school.
- There is a staged process where the school will write to parents if attendance falls below 93%. Copies of letters will be held on the child's records.
- Unauthorised absences will be reported to the LA by the Headteacher
- All parental requests and decisions whether authorised or unauthorised will be held on record in the school office
- The Governing Body, through Headteacher reports, will monitor the frequency of parental requests and the impact of authorised and unauthorised leave of absence on the school's attendance targets

Our school works with a company called '**AStar Attendance & Support Ltd**' to ensure that our attendance levels are the very best they can be. The team monitors all attendance records weekly and respond swiftly to any causes for concern.

St. Cuthbert's use a 'Traffic Light Initiative', which is intended to raise pupil attendance levels.

Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life and as you will already be aware; we expect regular and punctual attendance at this school. It is recognised that poor school attendance limits educational achievement and the future progress of young people.

The colours of a traffic light are being used to indicate the level of your child's school attendance:

Very poor attendance

Attendance is a cause for concern

Good attendance

RED = below 91%

AMBER = between 92% and 96%

GREEN = 97% and above

We will monitor the attendance of all pupils in school. After each monitoring period, you and your child will be notified of their traffic light colour for that period.

Our goal is for all pupils to meet the green target of 97% to 100% attendance. If your child fails to meet the target, you will receive a letter advising you of this and

you may be invited to a meeting at the school to discuss the reasons for the poor attendance.

We ask for the co-operation of parents to improve the life chances of their children. You can help us by:

- Encouraging your child to attend school punctually.
- Telephoning on the day of an absence and sending a letter to explain the absence on your child's return to school.
- Informing us of any changes or circumstances at home which may affect your child. Any such information will, of course, be kept in the strictest confidence.
- Supporting your child and the school by attending parent's meetings and taking an interest in your child's schoolwork.
- Leave of Absence in Term Time. Head Teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If your child has good attendance (many have 100%) none of this will ever be of concern to you. We also understand that children do get ill, but the school must be notified of any illness absence and must be satisfied that it is genuine. If we have any concerns or attendance drops below an acceptable level, we have to ask for documentary evidence from a medical professional to confirm that the absence is genuine.

One of the most important things your child can do to achieve academic success is also one of the most basic- going to school every day. In fact, research has shown that your child's attendance record may be the biggest factor influencing their academic success. Please support us in this matter.

Contact Details:

Jill Robson- AStar Attendance & Support Ltd.

Tel: 07387371915

From 1st September 2014, Sunderland Local Authority will be using **Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)** for unauthorised absences from school where such absence meets the criteria. The criteria for issuing FPNs are contained in the Sunderland Local Code of Conduct.

This policy will be reviewed annually

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| Date of Policy Review | September 2021 |
| Next Review | September 2022 |

Appendix 1



Leave of Absence Request Form

From 1st September 2013 The Department for Education announced changes to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. Head Teachers have not been allowed to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances since this date.

The Local Authority can fine parents for failing to ensure their child attends school.

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Name of Pupil: | Class: |
| Reason for leave of absence: | |
| Absence requested from: | To: |

I request permission for my child to be absent from school on the above dates. I understand that this absence will disrupt my child's learning. I will ensure that my child returns to school on the agreed date.

Signed:Parent/Guardian

Date.....

For School use only:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Date received: | |
| Attendance % to date for academic year 2021/22 | |
| Any previous requests this academic year: | YES / NO No. of days: |
| <u>Request authorised / unauthorised:</u> | |
| <u>Signed:</u> | <u>Date:</u> |

