

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

2023 - 2024

Introduction

At St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School, we recognise that regular attendance at school is essential to raising standards and attainment, and to ensure children reach their full potential. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School to support learning and achievement.

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

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. *As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.*

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School believes teachers, parents, carers, pupils and all members of its school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring students attend to achieve. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the *Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance* attached to this document.

Aims

- Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below).
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure there is a proactive whole school approach that embeds a consistency of practice.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, School Health and other partner agencies.

Promoting regular attendance

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parents/carers and pupils.

To help us all focus upon this, St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School will ensure:

- there is a designated senior leader for championing and improving attendance;
- effective strategies are in place to deter poor punctuality;
- an engaging curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly;
- high quality teaching and learning is delivered throughout the school;
- pupils are provided with appropriate support from school and partner agencies to minimise disaffection from school;
- vulnerable groups are provided with effective support at the earliest opportunity and attendance is monitored rigorously;
- effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided;
- parents/carers are kept informed of pupil attendance and punctuality through the school's attendance procedures, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required;
- good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual pupil incentives;
- attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with children in assemblies;
- attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence from school is required.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

We expect parents to:

- ensure that their child arrives for school on time.
- telephone school if their child is to be late.
- make routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments outside of school hours and confirm when the appointment is provided.
- contact school by 9am on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- respond to a text message/phone call that is received from school as a result of their child's absence; this is extremely important to ensure that the child is appropriately safeguarded.
- contact the office if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- inform us of any changes, especially to mobile telephone numbers, in case of emergency as we need up to date contact numbers at all times. (As a school we request a minimum of three emergency contact details be provided).
- contact the Headteacher and formally request by letter the request for exceptional circumstances leave of absence. These can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts, well-being days and birthdays.

What is Expected of School

School has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils. If a pupil is absent, we:

Reception to Year 6

- The start of the school day is 8.55am. The class teacher takes a register recording of who is present and absent from 8.55am, the registers are collected from classes at 9.10am.
- Any late pupils enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late, the office staff record details in a late book. The record shows name of the pupil, class and time. The register officially closes at 9.35am any pupil arriving after this time will be marked absent for this session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- All registers are monitored daily each morning for absences. If a child is absent with no reason recorded, our Admin Attendance Officer will contact families (First Day Response) to ascertain information with regards to the absence.
- If the school is not contacted about a child's absence, then the Admin Attendance Officer will phone the parent / carer of any absent pupil as soon as possible.
- If the parent / carer cannot be contacted, school will phone other contacts numbers if no contact can be made and a reason for absence is not provided, members of the Senior Leadership Team will assess if a home visit is needed to ensure the safety of the child and to find a reason for absence and ensure the safety of the child.
- If school has been informed of why a child is absent but they are off school for a number of days school may phone to check on how they are. We may also make a home welfare visit to see how they are.

- School closes at 3.15pm.
- Reasons for absence are recorded using the Department for Education's attendance codes.

Understanding types of attendance

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School has to legally record every absence. This is why it is important that parents/carers directly inform school regarding the reason for absence, on the first day of absence.

Authorised absence

Authorised absence - the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents, who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (where the child is unable to attend school) and medical/dental appointments
- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides medical evidence to support (e.g. evidence of hospital / dentist appointment)

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend school prior to / after the appointment.

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence - when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence following a parental request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as: birthdays, feeling tired; a duvet or well-being day, parent unwell to bring them to school
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have not been explained;
- pupils who arrive after the close of registration.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 warning letters can be issued (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Persistent absence

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for 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.

Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

Parent/Carers are asked to contact the school office (0151 709 2572) in the first instance. We will be able to talk about a return plan with you which will hopefully help and assist.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the Department of Education (DfE). This cohort of pupils are a priority group for St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support a child in improving their attendance. It is essential that parents/carers work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school.

Why regular attendance?

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and a parent/carer permitting their child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carers and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school. The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Review attendance with school every fortnight and investigate any pupils identified as cause for concern.
- Work with the school to analyse the attendance of any child below 95%. If under the persistent absence level of 90% appropriate action will be taken.
- Write to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems. The pupil's attendance will be monitored closely and if there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending.
- Make home visits when there is a serious cause for concern over attendance.

The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family. However, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists (as under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act of 1996), the EWO will be required to consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include Parenting Contracts Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders.

Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the local authority.

Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Prosecution may occur if the payment has not been made after 28 days.

School is unable to grant permission for parents to take their child on holiday during term time. If children are absent from school due to holidays their absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence. It is likely that you will be issued a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking your child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Leave of absence in term time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents 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.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

How we manage lateness

- School starts at 8.55am. The school day starts and registers are taken by 9:10am by the class teacher. Pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice. The close of registration for St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is 9.35am.

If a parent/carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the office who will offer support to resolve the problem.

Removal from roll

From the 1st September 2016, changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register. Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school. School must complete an Exit form and submit to the CME@liverpool.gov.uk inbox.

- provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school

If your child is leaving our school, parents are asked to:

- provide the school/attendance officer with comprehensive information about their plans, including: any date of a move; your new address and telephone numbers; your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to school in writing.

- if a pupil leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

People responsible for attendance matters at St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support, therefore, is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

Attendance Monitoring

Within our school, we have an Attendance Team that consists of one of our Assistant Headteachers (Attendance Lead), our Attendance and Punctuality Officer, our Administration Officer and our Nurture Lead. The team are responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

- The Assistant Headteacher monitors absence daily to identify children at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. Comparisons are made between the attendance of different cohorts within the school.
- The Attendance and Punctuality Officer liaises closely with our Administration Officers and our EWO to monitor attendance and punctuality very closely. Strong communication between the team and senior leaders is always in place.
- Nurture Lead stays in close communication with the Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance and Punctuality Lead in order to support with phone calls home and sharing any newly gathered information from nurture sessions that have been held.
- All staff are aware of children in their class who have been / are at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.
- When a child's attendance drops below 92% parents are notified to make them aware their child's attendance is dropping and is a concern.
- Every week the EWO works with the Attendance Officer to view attendance within school and investigate any pupils identified as cause for concern.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school compares attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the governing board.

Analysing Attendance

The school:

- Analyses attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and uses this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develops strategies to address these patterns.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school:

- Provides regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Uses data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy is approved by the full governing board.

Appendices – *working towards best practice - (Example guidance for strategies used in schools)*
Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupils	Arrive on school site for the start of the school day at 8.55am.
	Class Teacher	Registers are completed by 9:10am and ready to be collected and returned to the office. Ensure attendance has a high profile in class. Use Dojo reward system to promote good attendance. Discuss absence with pupils returning to school. Complete attendance notes to update main office.
	Office Staff	Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register. Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (from 9am) and inputting data on to the TEAMS' daily log. Gather Seesaw platform messages, parental voicemails and any emails regarding student absences. Ensure all late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is recorded in the late file and entered on to SIMS. First day response phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no phone call or Seesaw message has been left. SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required. Logging attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical, dental or visits. Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the first day contact systems. Daily Late process, log and send actions for relevant staff. Daily attendance information sent to DSL for monitoring purposes.
	Pastoral Staff	Work with targeted pupils. Support SLT with home visits when no contact has been made / pupils have been off for a length of time.
	EWO	Home visits / safeguarding home visits as required. Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers. Instigation of legal proceedings. Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to DSL for attendance.
	SLT / Designated Senior Leader (AHT)/ A & P Lead	Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with safeguarding requirements. Home visits when no contact has been made / pupils have been off for a length of time Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupil. Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively.

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	<p>Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their current attendance.</p> <p>Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by contacting parent/carers where appropriate.</p> <p>Use Dojo reward system to promote good attendance.</p>
	Office Staff	<p>Informing SLT of pupil patterns of absence.</p> <p>Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for DSL for attendance, class teachers and pupil rewards.</p> <p>Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parent/carers.</p>
	Designated Attendance Leader (AHT)/ A & P Officer	<p>Liaison with EWO, pastoral staff and class teachers regarding support work with identified pupils.</p> <p>Ensure all staff know their class % attendance for the previous week.</p> <p>Inform class teachers of SA / PA in their class.</p> <p>Inform class teachers of 'margin children' to be a focus the following week (88-90%, 90-92%).</p> <p>Send letters to 'margin' pupils 90-92% to make aware of PA.</p> <p>Determine priority actions for the following week.</p> <p>Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement.</p>

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	Designated Attendance Leader (AHT)/ A & P Officer	<p>Use attendance data to identify and act to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils.</p> <p>Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy.</p> <p>Determine priority actions for the next half term.</p> <p>Monitor and track attendance SA / PA.</p> <p>Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re. action plans or other pupils causing concern.</p> <p>Half termly attendance report for governors.</p>

TERMLY	Designated Attendance Leader (AHT)/ A & P Officer	<p>Ensure the importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off site provision.</p> <p>School Attendance Review alongside the EWO.</p> <p>Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance.</p> <p>Report to HT / Governors on attendance.</p> <p>Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents' evenings.</p>
	Head-teacher	<p>Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors.</p>

LEAVE IN TERM TIME REQUEST FORM



Before requesting leave in term time you need to think about:

The education your child will miss and the gaps in their learning.

The difficulty your child will have in catching up.

The effect it will have on your child's friendship groups.

The effect it will have on how well your child performs in school.

For your information:

- Amendments were made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which took effect from 1 September 2013. From this date **schools are not permitted to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**
- **All term time holiday/leave requests must be submitted to the Headteacher with the exceptional circumstances fully explained.** In order to make the decision whether to authorise leave or not, parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence supporting their circumstances.
- Parents/carers need to be aware that **Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child for unauthorised absence, for unauthorised leave taken in term time and/or for pupils stopped during a Truancy Patrol** (£60 if paid within 21 days; £120 if paid within 28 days as at 1 September 2013) in line with the Education (Penalty Notice Regulations) England 2013. The Council's Safeguarding and Social Inclusion Service will issue Penalty Notices on behalf of the Police, the Local Authority and the School.

Please complete and return to the School Office at least one week before the proposed leave

Name(s) of child(ren): Class(es):

Date of leave:

Dates of leave already requested this academic year:

Please provide a DETAILED reason why the leave MUST be taken during term time

(continue overleaf in necessary):

Signed: (Parent/Carer) Print Name: Date:

Note: Leave is not authorised until signed confirmation has been received from the Headteacher

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

After careful consideration of your request:

- Leave not authorised - Penalty notice not to be issued on this occasion
- Leave not authorised - Consideration will be given to issuing Penalty notice if leave taken
(see details above)
- Leave authorised

Comment:

Signed: (Headteacher) Date: