

# **Attendance Policy**

## **2024-25**



# **ST. LAWRENCE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Date reviewed: 30 September 2024

Date ratified by the Governing Board: 16 October 2024

## **AIMS:**

**We want attendance in our school to be as high as possible from the moment the children enter school until the time when they leave us in Year 6. Good attendance gives the children the best possible chance of achieving their potential. It gives children a better chance of achieving good academic outcomes and therefore helps to give children more opportunities as they move into Secondary school and into employment.**

**School is aware of a dip in school attendance nationally since the COVID 19 pandemic. Working with new policies and guidance such as the 2024 publication of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' we aim to restore and surpass these standards as quickly as possible.**

As a school we want:

- Our pupils to be in school and learning every day.
- Our whole school attendance percentage to be at least 95% and return to pre-pandemic level
- To be given a reason for every pupil absence.
- Families to take holidays within the school holiday periods.
- Unauthorised absence to be minimal
- Our children to arrive on time for school.
- To challenge and improve children who are persistently absent as we know this will adversely affect their life chances.
- To praise good attendance and give it a high profile in school
- We will employ an Attendance Officer to improve attendance in school – both as a whole school initiative and through working with individual children and families.

Also, we recognise that:

*'Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.'* (WTTISA 2024)

## **ATTENDANCE ZONES:**

Attendance zones have been set to help us consistently reward good attendance and manage attendance which needs improvement. They are:

Green Zone – 95% and above

Amber Zone – 91% – 94%

Red Zone – 90% and below

## **SHARING ATTENDANCE DATA:**

Every month, we will monitor attendance and share with the children in an age appropriate manner. We will inform parents of their child's attendance at least termly. This will be more regular if a child is persistently absent (below 90%) or severely absent (below 50%). In the case of

Severely Absent children we will be regularly working with the local authority and will consider all measures (including legal intervention) to secure and improvement.

### **WHY IS ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?**

Education is very important. Regular school attendance will help children to achieve their full potential and ensure they have a brighter future.

Going to school every day will help children learn, develop and achieve. It will build confidence, friendship and ambition.

The more children are in school the more likely they are to succeed at exams and at life.

Going to school every day means:

- Having lots of fun
- Making friends
- Taking part in activities
- Learning through play
- Building lasting friendships
- Better exam results

### **EFFECT OF ATTENDANCE ON OUTCOMES:**

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).<sup>3</sup>

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms, including crime (the proportion of children that had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence that had ever been persistently absent was 81% and for serious violence offence was 85%).

The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%). (Taken from WTTISA 2024)

## **DID YOU KNOW**

90% attendance means that children miss:

- One half day every week
- Nearly four weeks every school year
- Over one school year in a school career

2 weeks holiday in term time every year with no other absences means that your child:

- Can only ever achieve 95% attendance, which is the 'Amber' zone
- Will miss about two terms in a school career

Also being 5 minutes late every day means missing about 3 days of school every year.

## **WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PUPILS:**

- Have a positive attitude about coming to school
- Be prepared for the school day
- Be willing to learn
- Help to make sure they arrive on time. The school day starts from 8.45am.
- Pupils to pride themselves on being part of the school community

## **WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PARENTS / CARERS:**

- That they will get their child(ren) to school every day
- Don't let children stay off for a minor ailment
- Parents are asked to contact school on the first day of absence. Good practice is to phone up before 8.45am giving details of the reason for absence and when you expect them to return.
- Keep the school updated if your child(ren) is/are going to be off for more than one day
- Help your child to complete any catch-up work given to them as a result of being absent from school.
- Try to make **all** appointments (for doctors, dentist, optician etc) outside of school hours
- For hospital appointments please bring your child into school for part of the day if possible
- Book family holidays during school holidays. If you do plan on taking your child(ren) out of school on holiday please complete a 'holiday request form' so we know exactly why they are absent during that time and when they will be back in school\* (see below)
- Attend any meetings requested by your child's class teacher/Head Teacher/Attendance Officer to discuss attendance if required
- Engage with parenting contract request
- Make sure your child understands the benefits of regular attendance at school

## **WHAT SCHOOL IS EXPECTED TO DO:**

- Use electronic systems to record attendance and absence. Class teachers are responsible for completing registers for both morning and afternoon sessions. These registers are taken from 8.45am and 1.00pm (Infants) / 1.15pm (Juniors).

- Record details of any holidays taken during term time. Holidays taken during term time will **not be authorised** unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should a child be taken on holiday during term time without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In this instance the Head Teacher may make a request to the local Authority for their consideration of issuing a **fixed penalty notice**. Please note that a request for a holiday in term time is highly unlikely to count as 'exceptional circumstances.' Details of fixed penalty notices are attached below.
- Contact parents by telephone where no reason has been provided for absence on a given day. If no reason is given or the Head Teacher does not think the reason is acceptable, the absence will be marked as **unauthorised**.
- Should there be any uncertainty – those responsible for school registers should undertake a physical check with regard to children's whereabouts before contacting parents.
- Address Persistent Absence; a child becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason
- The school Attendance Officer may be asked to make a home visit or contact you where attendance becomes a concern to offer support as required
- Invite parents to participate in a parenting contract in an effort to improve attendance
- Refer to the Local Authority if attendance falls below 90% for consideration of legal monitoring
- Contact the school nurse for details of an absence where required
- Remind parents about the importance of good attendance using newsletters and any other documents produced for parents
- Keep parents and children informed of individual attendance percentages using regular letters and charts which are displayed around school and informing them of the zone they are in
- School is committed to rewarding good attendance. Each year incentives can be earned for example each term, children over 98% for that term could win a bike or another high profile prize. Each week an attendance award for 100% attendance is on offer. Classes with the best attendance can win a whole class prize (for example, extended golden time or non-uniform day)
- Ensure children are aware of their attendance and know that good attendance is key in excellent educational outcomes. It is also habit forming as children move through their education and into the work place.

### **PUNCTUALITY:**

The school day starts from 8.45am (some classes start at 8.50am). The register is taken between 8.45am and 9.00am. Any child arriving after that time will be marked late. It is important to be on time for school as the first few minutes of the day are used to give out instructions. Basic skills are also taught during the first 30 minutes of each day after the register has been taken. If your child is consistently missing these it is detrimental to their learning. It is also very disruptive to your child's day, the teacher and the rest of the class.

Any child who has to enter the school via the front office because the gates to the yard have been shut will be marked as late. Their number of minutes late will be recorded by the office staff, which is updated to the register.

We will formally monitor children whose punctuality is a cause for concern.

**CONCLUSION:**

Through the implementation of this policy we aim to achieve good attendance for all children to help them thrive, be their best and have a brighter future. Remember you can discuss any attendance issues or any concerns you have with a member of staff at any time. We believe it is the responsibility of us all to achieve good attendance.

We value your support in working with us to help maintain our school ethos.

**Policy Renewal Date: November 2025**

**Policy Renewed / Updated: October 2024**