

## **St John Bosco RC PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The following Attendance policy has been agreed by governors and staff at St John Bosco Catholic Primary School. This Attendance Policy takes careful account of The Education (Pupil's Attendance Records) Regulations 1991. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997), The Education Act 1996, The Education Act 1996, the 'Social Inclusion: Pupil Support' DfEE Circular 10/99, the policy of the Local Education Authority and the aims of the school as outlined in associated/relevant school documentation.

### **The Management of Attendance**

Gill Horton has overall responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the attendance policy within the school.

### **School Target for Attendance**

The school has set the following target of 97.5%

### **Mission Statement**

The foundation of all good learning is based upon a continuum of progression and this can only be fully realised with regular attendance and good time keeping. Pupils must be in school in order to learn.

Attending class, being on time, completing assigned work and contributing to the class are essential in the development of our children. Working with classmates', sharing ideas, accessing the teacher's knowledge and expertise and the presentations of materials is something that is not easily accessed elsewhere. Good attendance and punctuality is therefore central to success and achievement.

With this in mind the school will promote a positive attitude and high regard towards this and, by working with pupils, parents/carers, the EWS and other related agencies, will aim to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality at all times.

### **Principles**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at St John Bosco Catholic Primary School and establish positive life habits necessary for future success. They also minimise the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

### **Aims:**

- to share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone here at the school and the broader school community;
- to develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of a school's life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum - staff particularly strive:
  - i. to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others, i.e. have a positive attitude to life-long learning;
  - ii. to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours.
- this attendance policy and its implementation should encourage some pupils to attend school more regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.
  - i. registering pupils accurately and efficiently;

- ii. setting attendance targets for individual pupils and year groups;
  - iii. contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
  - iv. regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality;
  - v. reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DCSF as appropriate.
- to monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National and LEA-level.

## **SECTION 1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **PARENTS**

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. In addition to statutory obligations parents have all signed the Home-School Agreement - a section of which describes the agreed responsibilities of the parents:

### **THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

To help fulfil parents important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged, to the extent feasible:

- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- To notify the School if their child cannot attend for any reason - this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons;
- To work with the School and Education Welfare Service and Officer (EWO) to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- **To ensure they obtain 'leave of absence' for their child if required during term time and attend the follow up meeting for holidays with the EWO in attendance.**

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly and arrives on time;
- take an interest in their child's school work;
- make sure their child understands that the parents do not approve of absence from school;
- support the school in its efforts to control inappropriate behaviour;
- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance;
- co-operate with the school staff and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and gets a proper education;
- discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance, e.g. a family holiday, a wedding or other special occasions, etc. Parents should not normally:
  - i. expect the school to agree to shopping trips during school hours;
  - ii. take their own family holidays outside of the school holidays;
  - iii. take their own family holidays during test time;
  - iv. expect the school to agree to their child missing more than a total of ten school days for family holidays in any one school year.

### **PUPILS**

- i. Pupils are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons after break.
- ii. Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- iii. Pupils should use their best endeavours to pass on absence notes from parents to their class teacher and to pass school correspondence to their parents.

### **LA & EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICE (EWS)**

As need to co-operate about any attendance problems, and where many children attend school in neighbouring authority areas they should have standing arrangements for co-ordination to prevent truancy. Early warning of attendance problems will normally be to the LA where the pupil attends school, but any necessary legal action is the responsibility of the LA where the child lives.

It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that parents meet their statutory responsibilities either by registering the child at a school or by making other effective educational arrangements. If a child is registered as a pupil at a particular school, that school must give permission for a child to be absent. If a child does not go to the school at which he or she is registered, the relevant LA can take legal action against the parents. LAs' legal powers to enforce attendance are:

- **School Attendance Orders** - these enforce the parents' responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive suitable education;
- **Prosecution** for irregular attendance - this can result in Parents being fined up to £1000 for each child who is not going to school (according to Sandwell LA Policy)
- **Parenting Orders** - a legal requirement for a parent to undertake specific measures in order to improve the situation.
- **Education Supervision Orders** - this means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to the Parents and the child.

LAs are responsible, by law, for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend their school regularly. Most LAs employ EWOs (also called Education Welfare Officers) to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibilities.

Our school, like others in the LA, has a named EWO responsible for the attendance of all the pupils at St John Bosco Catholic Primary School. Where a child lives in a neighbouring LA, follow-up action will require co-operative working with the relevant EWS. Any necessary legal action is the responsibility of the LEA where the child is domicile.

EWOs check our registers regularly to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the school's policy and to identify any patterns of absence which have not already been notified. The EWO promptly follows up incidents where the staff have identified a possible attendance problem (pupils whose attendance is 85% or less even after school intervention - See Guidelines).

The EWO works closely with the school and families to resolve attendance issues, arranging home visits where necessary. The key to success is an effective working relationship between our school and the EWS includes:

- shared policies and operational practices between the EWS and our school (see below);
- clearly defined roles of school staff and the EWO;
- how much time the EWO will devote to the school;
- expectation of the quality of EWO service;
- arrangements for referral, regular review, monitoring and evaluation;
- procedures for resolving enquiries.

Although enforcing school attendance is the EWO's main responsibility they also undertake other important related duties including helping to arrange alternative educational provision for excluded pupils.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

The governing body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the Headteacher manages the day-to-day running of the School and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

## THE HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher is required to tell the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised (includes independent schools). Headteachers can, of course, notify the LA earlier if there are areas of concern. The initial contact with the LA will be made with the school EWO. Normally the School itself will have made and recorded efforts to address the non-attendance through:

- action by the class teacher as part of their day-to-day duties;
- involvement of others within the School, e.g. Headteacher or Deputy Head;
- contact with parents and parent/ child interviews.

Referral to the EWO would normally take place if:

- a pattern of irregular attendance or lateness is either continuing or worsening;
- parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school, and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the School;
- condoned, unjustified absence is increasingly a problem;
- the parents ask for excessive authorised absence.
- **pupil overall attendance remains at 85% or less.**

The Headteacher is also required to maintain two registers:

- an admission register (known as the school roll) which contains a list of all pupils at the School;
- an attendance register (unless all pupils are boarders) for all pupils of compulsory school age on the admission register. This must be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Similarly, the School keeps a register of pupils present on the school site during lunch time, this is needed in the event of an emergency to show which pupils need to be accounted for.

The Headteacher ensures that a clear policy on attendance is in place, which is known to staff, pupils and parents. The positive link with parents can be strengthened if the arrangements for notifying absence and the School's policy towards absence (authorised and unauthorised) is regularly publicised. Each year, the School is required to submit to the DCSF details of the level of absence within the School. The report details how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence.

## CLASS TEACHER

Class teachers must enforce this policy strictly. If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called and submitted, the School Attendance Officer will contact the parents the same day wherever possible. The absence will also be followed up with the parent to ensure that a written note or verbal acceptable explanation is received explaining the absence. **Where no reply is received, a further letter will sent warning that unless the absence is explained it will have to be recorded as unauthorised.**

When a pupil is missing from class for no apparent reason, the class teacher will immediately inform the school office so that the pupil's absence can be further investigated. Class teachers can also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised absence by delivering interesting and engaging lessons and insisting on punctuality for themselves, colleagues and pupils.

## POLICE

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place designated by the LA.

## SECTION 2 INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE RATES

There are many reasons why pupils miss school without permission as such; there is no one solution to the problem of absenteeism- for example setting reward schemes, such as certificates, extra-curricular activities and breakfast clubs. Wherever possible the School works alongside the LA in supporting and implementing attendance initiatives which:

- help children develop the habit of regular attendance;
- show parents clearly that unjustified absence will be recorded and challenged;

The School has considered initiatives that are most appropriate and always takes into account a pupil's individual circumstances, e.g. setting reward schemes such as certificates, for 100% attendance or effort to attend. Other helpful initiatives include:

- Implementing first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge. It is hoped that this sends a clear signal to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up;
- Encouraging regular attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled, which are effective particularly when pupils are not with the class teacher;
- Interviews for target families completed by the senior leadership team each term and monitoring to ensure attendance improves before referral to the EWO;
- Entrance attendance displays (raising the profile of attendance in class)
- 100% attendance certificates at the end of each term/year for pupils who have full attendance for that term/year;
- the class with the overall best weekly attendance is awarded with 5 minutes extra social or playtime;
- The introduction of a breakfast club;
- Organising an attendance trip for pupils as an incentive on a termly/yearly basis.
- The introduction of the SIMS.net computer system which stores accessible pupil profiles containing a full range of information from both the existing electronic attendance system and the school management system. Additional technician hours were also allocated to support the network. This school management system:
  - i. is accessible to all admin staff and the HT/DHT;
  - ii. enables staff to have access to a complete pupil profile in reviewing non-academic achievements as well as pupils academic performance;
  - iii. enables staff to interrogate data and produce ICT generated management information and reports;
- the Headteacher has made a concerted effort to encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards authorised absence in the prospectus and regular communications. The DfES leaflet School Attendance: Information for Parents is distributed to parents of new pupils and whenever deemed to be helpful. Copies are located inside the main Reception area of the building.

### **SECTION 3 KEEPING THE REGISTER**

Registers should be treated as legal documents - indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they should be retained for a minimum of three years. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register **must** clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the School.

#### **Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Parents reporting absence should give the reason and date of return for the child. If this is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the School Attendance Officer. For periods of extended absence, the school WILL seek the advice of the school nurse and EWO and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised for the illness.

**Please note - Absences for Head lice will not be authorised.**

Where the school has been unable to contact the parents to explain an absence, a written notification (endorsed by the Head teacher's signature) will normally be issued to parents to complete. If this is not returned to school, the absence will remain unauthorised and will be passed to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

**NB - Please note that NO absences are authorised by the Head Teacher unless the pupil's past attendance is taken into consideration. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters WILL be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made.**

N.B. Authorised absences are equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. Even when pupils are engaged in Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the School needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or a real emergency. In the case of a pupil leaving school during a session and/or returning later, care must be taken to maintain the accuracy of who is known to be on site in the case of an emergency - for this reason pencil annotations can be used.

All registers must allow for the original entry and any subsequent correction to be clearly distinguishable and that, on retrieval, they appear in chronological order.

### **Annotation For Absences**

The SIMS attendance system records absence with N for no reason yet supplied. An absence return is then completed and the appropriate attendance code applied.

#### Codes used for unauthorised absence:

Late after register close (9.30am or 1.30pm)	L
Unauthorised circumstances	O

#### Codes used for authorised absence

Present	/ (AM)
Present	\ (PM)
Educated off site	B
Other authorised circumstances	C
Dual registration	D
Excluded	E
Extended Family Holiday (agreed)	F
Annual Family Holiday (not agreed)	G
Annual Family Holidays (agreed)	H
Illness	I
Late before register close	L
Medical/Dental	M
No reason yet provided for absence	N
Unauthorised absence	O
Approved Sporting Activity	P
Religious Observance	R

Study Leave	S
Traveller Absence	T
Late after register close	u
Educational Visit	V
Work Experience	w
Only staff should attend	X
Enforced closure	Y
Attendance not required	!

These codes and the criteria of authorised absence are all recorded by the Attendance Officer into the computerised SIMS Attendance System.

### **Lateness**

The School actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. Normal register entries do not usually indicate the severity or degree of lateness and the School therefore has systems to detect patterns of late arrival. Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents. Pupils who are late are recorded in the Late Book. The Head Teacher completes a punctuality trawl each term and targets families who are at risk. A monitoring period will then follow, and if progress is not made then a referral to the EWO will be made.

### **Temporary School Closures**

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, no attendance registers are needed.

### **Deleting Pupils From The Admissions Register**

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. Where a school has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll for any reason, they should notify their LEA. If a pupil is to be taken off the admissions register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school;
- if a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation;
- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

If schools are concerned they should alert the Area Child Protection Representative (as named in the School's Child Protection Policy) without delay. The LEA's Designated Child Protection Officer will then decide whether to alert Social Services. Social Services may in turn involve the police. If, however, schools have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should contact the police directly.

When a family returns to their country of origin for a long period of time, the school will work with the EWO to draw up an Extended Holiday Contract, stating the agreed date of return. Should the pupil not return at the agreed date, then the child will be taken off roll as agreed by the school, parents and EWO.

## **SECTION 4 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the School and staff, pupils and parents should be reminded regularly of its contents. Effective monitoring/evaluation of the attendance policy and guidelines is dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records. The criteria by which the monitoring and evaluation of the provision is undertaken are described below:

#### **PARENTS:**

1. the degree to which the pupils and parents have been consulted during the formation and implementation of relevant policies;
2. any pertinent feedback from parents;
3. regular updating of the information pack for parents (Prospectus);
4. the amount of data and information given to parents regarding the attendance rates of their children (annually in the end of year report or as requested)
5. **ATTENDANCE REPORTS TO PARENTS:** The school issues half-termly attendance reports to ALL parents in order that they can begin to actively monitor their own child's attendance. The school sets challenging targets for overall attendance and expects all pupils to reach the target of 96%+ (180 days in school/10 days absence) for each academic year. Children who fall below the agreed levels will be targeted by the school and Education Welfare Officer, where applicable, in order to provide support and a possible solution to the ongoing absence.  
**If parents at all worried about their child's attendance levels or wish to discuss any part of the school attendance policy further, they are encouraged to contact the school for an appointment.** Parents are also encouraged to offer their views on attendance when meeting with the Head Teacher or class teacher at formal consultation evenings, informally on a day to day basis and in the bi-annual school parent survey.

#### **PUPILS:**

5. the degree to which the social inclusion targets have been met - these include:
  - pupil achievement, e.g. increase in attendance over time;
  - the numbers of fixed-period and/or permanent exclusions;
6. any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;
7. the number, frequency or extent of incidents of poor behaviour in school;
8. the rate of reintegration into mainstream education of pupils who have been out of school;
9. the number of reports of bullying;
10. any pertinent feedback from pupils;

#### **OUTSIDE AGENCIES & LA:**

11. the instigation of effective links with LEAs' behaviour support plans;
12. the effectiveness of a partnership approach, making full and appropriate use of the experience and expertise of all agencies with relevant skills, e.g. the Education Welfare and Educational Psychology Services, voluntary organisations and the private sector wherever appropriate ;

#### **BUDGET:**

13. any appropriate adjustments in budget allocation to reflect changing needs;

#### **PLANNING:**

14. the consideration of attendance issues in development planning. Planning should have a clear implementation strategy and statement of objectives and targets, together with performance indicators against which the effectiveness of provision can be measured;
15. time allocated to planning for pupils with special needs related to attendance;
16. the effects on school ethos/atmosphere related to attendance and related policies;

#### **STAFF/INSET:**

17. involvement by all staff in INSET courses relating to attendance issues as required;
18. school management involvement in attendance issues;
19. any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;



## **INDEPENDENT REPORTS:**

20. analysis and publication of OFSTED/HMI/LEA reports.

## **APPENDIX 1 CATEGORIES OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

For all absence known in advance pupils/ parents are encouraged to give advance notice and to supply written evidence, such as dental appointment cards, etc. In all cases the Head Teacher will consider criteria such as the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the pupil's overall attendance pattern, etc.

### **Illness, Medical And Dental Appointments**

Pupils/parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. A pupil receiving medical treatment should be brought into school to be marked 'present' and then signed out when collected by the parent. If possible the child should be returned to school after the appointment and signed back in school at reception. **If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the School Health Service, the School Nurse or the pupil's GP.**

### **Interview For A Place At Another School (Including Entrance Examinations)**

If the interview takes place and the School is satisfied it is a legitimate activity, absence can be recorded as "other authorised circumstances".

### **Dual Registration**

Where a pupil is dually registered at two institutions, e.g. a mainstream school and a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or Special School, the pupil is registered as authorised absent while they are attending the other institution. A similar situation arises whilst traveller children are travelling - during this time they should enrol with another school.

### **Special Situations And Occasions**

The School responds sensitively to special situations or requests to attend events such as weddings and funerals. Situations such as family bereavement, or the child caring for a sick or disabled family member should clearly be recorded as authorised absence.

### **Public Performances**

The Local Authority must licence a pupil aged 5 - 16 to take part in a public performance. Licensed participation should therefore clearly be treated as authorised absence.

### **Approved Educational Activities Off-Site**

The following activities show when the approved educational activity categories (P, V, B) can be used:

"V" - field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;

"P" - participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;

"B" - pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school, i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration. This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll.

### **Family Holidays**

**The school adopts a strategy of not authorizing any holidays unless in exceptional circumstances such a bereavement.**

All holiday requests should be received 2 weeks before the absence request and EACH PARENT will be required to attend a meeting to discuss the holiday request, the majority of the time in attendance with the Headteacher.

## APPENDIX 2

## PUPIL EXCLUSION

A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the School - this includes the period whilst any review or appeal is in progress and must continue until the pupil is removed from the school roll.

"Exclude" means exclude on disciplinary grounds without specifying any degree of seriousness. There are two categories of exclusion: fixed period (suspension) or permanent (expulsion). Pupils may also be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime break between the morning and afternoon school sessions. N.B. When an exclusion is for a fixed period (suspension), appropriate work must be set as soon as is reasonable for the excluded pupil.

Exclusion is a serious step which should be used only in response to serious breaches of a school's discipline policy (Social Inclusion Policy). Exclusion should only be sanctioned after;

- i. a range of alternative strategies to resolve the pupil's disciplinary problems have been tried and proven to have failed and;
- ii. where allowing the pupil to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of other pupils and staff, (or of the pupil himself or herself).

Only the Headteacher (or Acting Head teacher) can exclude a pupil from school and may:

- **not delegate that power to someone else;**
- exclude a pupil for one or more fixed periods not exceeding a total of 45 school days in any one school year;
- also exclude a pupil permanently;
- also convert a fixed period exclusion into a permanent exclusion, if he or she decides circumstances warrant this.

In all cases the Headteacher will promptly:

- inform the pupil's parent of the period of the exclusion, or that the exclusion is permanent;
- give the reasons for the exclusion;
- advise the parent that he or she may make representations about the exclusion to the governing body's discipline committee;
- advise the parent how his or her representations may be made;
- in the case of a permanent exclusion being confirmed, remove a pupil from the school roll on the school day either:
  - i. after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion;
  - ii. on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made;
  - iii. the pupil takes up a place elsewhere before events i. or ii. occur.

The Headteacher will immediately notify both the LA and the governing body's discipline committee of the details of an exclusion, (including the reasons for it) in the following cases:

- permanent exclusions
- fixed period exclusions are converted to permanent exclusions;
- fixed period exclusions total more than five school days in any one term;
- an exclusion would result in the loss of an opportunity to take an external exam

There are statutory procedures involving disciplinary and appeals committees for the further process of dealing with exclusions and appeals against such actions. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised. Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.

**Reviewed January 18**

**To be reviewed in September 19**