

**ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

MISSION STATEMENT

As the pupils, parents, staff and governors of St Patrick's school:

OUR MISSION IS TO FOLLOW THE LOVING EXAMPLE SHOWN BY JESUS CHRIST

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS

At St Patrick's Catholic Primary School we believe that good attendance is the key to helping children to reach their full potential. We are keen to work with parents to ensure that every child has good attendance.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school, on time, every day the school is open.

Every absence affects a child's learning and it has been shown that regular absences will have a serious impact on their future progress. As well as this, pupils' absence or late arrival disrupts teaching and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

What does the law say? (Section 7 Education Act 1996)

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their children. Absences from school will be unauthorised unless agreed by the Headteacher, and only in exceptional circumstances. Regular unauthorised absence from school may result in involvement by the Local Authority (Southampton City Council) Education Welfare Service and could lead to a prosecution.

Penalty Notices (Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003).

A Penalty Notice may be requested by the school and issued by the Local Authority due to poor attendance including unauthorised leave of absence. Each parent must pay the Council £60 per child within 21 calendar days of issue of the Penalty Notice.

The Education Welfare Officer will also be informed of children who regularly arrive late after the registers have closed at 9.30am. Penalty notices can be issued if a child is late after the close of registers on 10 occasions or more during any 80 possible school sessions (8 school weeks)

The school day

Our school day starts at 8.55am and finishes at 3.20pm.

Children must arrive at school on time every day. Doors open at 8.45am and early morning activities to support and reinforce learning are ready for the children as soon as they come in. Children should be in their classrooms by 8.55am when registration begins.

Registers close at 9.30am. If children arrive after this time they will receive an unauthorised absence (U code), this will affect their attendance percentage even though they are in school

Registers are taken again at 1.15pm for the afternoon session.

If a child is absent and parents have not contacted school by 9.30am the school office will telephone the parent asking for the reason for absence, followed up if necessary by an e-mail and text message. It is a safeguarding concern if the school is unaware of every pupil's whereabouts during school hours.

What happens if a child does not attend school regularly?

Every child is expected to attend school every day. Any child whose attendance is lower than 90% will be considered a Persistently Absent Pupil and monitored closely by the School Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer through regular meetings in school. A parent may receive a letter or telephone call from the School Attendance Officer or the Education Welfare Officer, or they may be invited in for a meeting to discuss attendance and work together to reduce future absences.

Persistent absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice being issued.

Should there be continued unauthorised absence from school a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who could use legal means to enforce regular school attendance.

What is AUTHORISED ABSENCE?

There are two types of absence – AUTHORISED and UNAUTHORISED. The absence is authorised by the Headteacher and NOT by the parent.

Absence can be authorised by the Headteacher when there is considered to be exceptional circumstances for the pupil to be away during term time. A request must be made in writing BEFORE the absence is taken (leave of absence request forms are available from the school office).

Absences will not be authorised when no reason has been given or if the reason supplied is not considered to be exceptional circumstances.

AUTHORISED absences may include:

- Child's own illness
- Emergency medical appointment
- Unavoidable hospital appointments
- Religious observances
- Close family bereavement
- School Exclusion

UNAUTHORISED absences:

- Holidays
- Birthdays or similar family celebrations
- Routine medical appointments
- Day trips/ theatre visits
- Illness of parent or guardian
- Personal appointments (not medical)
- Shopping trips during school hours
- Closure of a sibling's school

Can a child have a family holiday in term time?

No.

Holidays in term time will NOT be authorised. When unauthorised holiday is taken, each parent may be liable to a fixed penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued, following investigation, for unauthorised absence of 10 or more sessions (5 school days) during any 80 possible school sessions (8 school weeks) These do not need to be consecutive days.

What should parents do if their child is unwell?

If a child is too unwell to attend school, please contact the school office as soon as possible on each morning of the day of absence. Messages can be left in a variety of ways:

- Telephoning the school on 023 8044 8502 (option 1) and leaving a message.
- Sending a message via Parentmail.
- E-mailing info@st-patricks.southampton.sch.uk
- Visiting the school office

If a child is repeatedly absent due to ill health, parents may be asked to supply evidence which could be in the form of a GP appointment card, prescription or named prescription medicine. It may also become necessary to meet with parents to discuss a referral to the school nurse.

IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT EVERY ABSENCE TO THE SCHOOL. Failure to do this will mean that the absences are recorded as unauthorised and may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

Medical appointments

Routine medical appointments should be made outside of school hours.

If a child does have unavoidable medical appointment during school time, every effort should be made to prevent them from missing the whole day, it is expected that the parent collect the child from school and returns the child back to school afterwards. The school will ask to see evidence of the medical appointment in the form of appointment card, hospital letter, e-mail or text message.

How can parents help?

Parents working together with St Patrick's is vital in ensuring that their child has a rewarding and happy time at school, good attendance is an important part of this. Parent's communication with the school and their ongoing support with attendance will help with their child's journey through their time at St Patrick's.

Talk to your child about their school work, to make sure they do not have worries, which may stop them wanting to come to school. If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please contact the school. All staff at School are very approachable, and willing to discuss any concerns you may have about your child.

A full copy of the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at School can be obtained from the school or Education Welfare Service