

St Gildas' Catholic Junior School



“Through our actions we will try to live as Jesus lived.”

Attendance Policy

January 2014

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence and to maximise pupils educational opportunities;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parents if a child fails to attend school and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils, when deemed necessary.
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- meet with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions.
- Will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness if there are concerns about a child's welfare.
- Will notify EWO after 10 days unexplained absence.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the main playground is supervised from 8.45am when the school gate is also opened.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 9.00am and pupils who arrive after 9.05am will be recorded as late.
- Registers close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this is deemed absent.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.30pm.

- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by the school and may be referred to Education Welfare.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to **write** a letter or send an email, to notify the school of any planned absence, giving the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- children must be signed out when leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a child is being collected from the school, parents must report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- if a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person.*

Leave of Absence

School holiday dates and inset days are circulated to all families well in advance to enable parents to book holidays at appropriate times.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Head teacher and Governors have determined that:

- where leave of absence in term time is requested, it will only be granted due to **exceptional circumstances** (see appendix 2), an application form must be requested from the school office or downloaded from the school website (see appendix 3) and submitted for consideration by the Head teacher on behalf of the school governors, prior to the requested date.
- a child's attendance record will be considered before granting leave of absence.
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may be referred to education welfare officer.
- please note that leave of absence **will not** be authorised during assessment periods.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty Notices for Holidays

In accordance with guidance from the local authority, holidays will not be authorised by the school and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

St Gildas' Catholic School hold attendance panels in conjunction with the EWO, any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance staff will refer to EWO who work in partnership with school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Childs regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received in writing and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

Appendix One

Although this is not an exhaustive list, please find below some examples of what we consider to be examples of authorised and unauthorised absence.

Authorised absences:

- genuine illness of the pupil;
- hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil;
- major religious observances;
- visits to prospective new schools;
- external exams or educational assessments;
- attendance at wedding of close family.

Unauthorised absences:

- shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;
- a birthday treat;
- oversleeping due to a late night;
- looking after other children / other family member;
- appointments for other family members;
- revision day for selective school exams/tests.

Appendix Two

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave from school. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See appendix 2) Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Appendix Three

Request for Authorised Absence Form

Please be reminded that amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments set out that headteachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances"**.

Parents should be aware of the impact absence from school will have on their child's education, particularly in terms of the continuity of learning.

Child's name **Class**

Dates of requested absence

Total number of days requested

Reason for requesting absence

.....
.....
.....

Parent/Carer's name **Date**

All requests for authorised absences should be made **as soon as you are aware** of a forthcoming event which will entail your child being absent from school during term time.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Date

Re: (Child's Name)

In line with school policy, we are able to grant the above request and will adjust the register accordingly. Your child's absence will be recorded as authorised on this occasion.

In line with school policy, we are unable to grant the above request on this occasion.

Mrs. G. Hood
Headteacher