



CARDINAL HEENAN
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Information for Parents

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This leaflet summarises the school's attendance policy for parents. The full policy is available on the school website. The staff team at Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School is committed, in partnership with parents, pupils, governors and Children Leeds, to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

All pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. We believe that regular attendance is of the greatest importance because pupils will:

- Have full access to the curriculum and are more likely to achieve their potential
- Be able to build relationships and develop social skills
- Be able to broaden their experiences and enjoy many extra curricular activities
- Be able to develop a more positive attitude to school and the world of work, learning the importance of being punctual and reliable
- Be able to develop a fuller sense of belonging to the Catholic Community
- Remain within the law

The Education Act 1996 states : "If any child of compulsory school age fails to attend school, his/her parent/carer is guilty of an offence."

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly, aiming for 100% attendance.
- ask parents/carers to use the Pupil Absence Line, **0113 887 3241**, on the first day of any absence and leave a message there.
- discuss promptly with their tutor, Year Manager, or Attendance Manager any problems that deter them from attending school.
- attend school punctually i.e. to register by 8.55 a.m. and again in the afternoon by 2.10 p.m. Attend school appropriately equipped for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/guardians and other persons who have day to day responsibility for children and young people will:

- contact the school on **the first day of the child's absence** using school's telephone absence line, tel; **887 3241**, send a note on their return to school or write a note in the Pupil Planner, stating a **REASON for the absence**. Please also ring if your child is going to be late.
- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day with appropriate equipment, Pupil Planner etc;
- contact the Year Manager promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- refrain from taking their child on holiday during term time.

Requests for Holiday or Term Time Leave

The school holiday dates are published annually in the School Calendar. Headteachers **may not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holiday leave for pupils during term time **will not be authorised**. Exceptional circumstances will only be considered in consultation with the Head Teacher.

Please note that if parents, carers or guardians take their child out of school for a holiday, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register. In line with Leeds City Council's policy for dealing with unauthorised absences, families may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Warning and/or a Penalty Notice through the Attendance Strategy Team, for 5 days or more. Fines may be levied. Families may face prosecution in the Magistrates' Court if fines are not paid.

By law parents do not have a right to take their children out of school during term time and must by law ask permission for their child to miss school. In addition the school must know the reason for any absence from a safeguarding point of view.

We are grateful to parents for your cooperation in maintaining high levels of attendance at Cardinal Heenan. This is clearly in the best interests of all pupils.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children to a different school, move outside the Local Authority or leave the country, they must inform school as soon as possible **in writing addressed to the Head Teacher**. **A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:**

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next one
- the address of the new school
- where relevant, the new home address
- confirmation that the pupil has started at the new school.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the next school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not received the above information, the family will be referred to the Attendance Strategy Team and the child referred to the Children Missing Education Team.

Parental support to reduce absences

Thank you to all those parents who continue to support our Attendance Policy by taking measures to further reduce absences and maintain maximum time in school for their child.

Attendance and attainment go hand in hand. Research has shown that if a pupil misses 17 or more days in ANY school year for any reason, this will reduce any one of his/her GCSE results by one grade.

You can continue to help by ensuring the following:

- ⇒ Make **general medical check-up appointments** for your child **in school holidays**
- ⇒ Make appointments at doctors' surgeries **after school**, as many are now open until quite late
- ⇒ Produce a doctors' /dental/orthodontist **appointment card** if your child arrives late during a morning or needs to leave early for an **unavoidable appointment**
- ⇒ **Return your child to school** immediately after a medical appointment, if your child is well, rather than give them the whole day off
- ⇒ Obtain **medical evidence** in the form of a doctor's note, Consultant's appointment letter, prescription information, appointment card or advice from a medical practitioner.

Persistent Absentees

Parents may be notified at various intervals throughout the year that their child is falling into the category of Persistent Absentee. **Please note that this does include pupils who have had genuine reasons for absence.**

Transport and Bad Weather

In the event of severe weather school will endeavour to **remain open** to pupils unless to do so would be a health and safety risk.

Pupils who come to school by public transport or school bus:-

If a pupil misses the school bus or regular service bus, it remains the **parent's / carer's responsibility to make alternative arrangements for their child to get to school**. We ask you to make every effort to ensure your child does not miss school under these circumstances and request that you leave a telephone message on the Pupil Absence Line to explain any late arrival caused by transport or weather conditions. School cannot authorise absences under these circumstances.

Suggestions for improving School Attendance

Health Issues

Reducing the spread of Infection

If your child suffers from symptoms that suggest they may have an infectious or contagious illness please consider other pupils and staff in school (i.e. some who may have reduced immunity or be suffering from other health problems) and do not send your child to school.

Such symptoms might include;

Vomiting and/or diarrhoea

Flu or flu like symptoms

Red, sore discharging eyes

Please inform school via the pupil absence line **Tel: 887 3241** and **seek medical advice** if appropriate. Please act responsibly and do not send your child back to school, particularly with vomiting and diarrhoea, until they have been clear of symptoms for a minimum of 24

hours. These measures combined with good hand hygiene should help to reduce the spread of infection in our school environment and therefore improve attendance.

Allergies

Some pupils may already know that they have an allergy to pollen and have hay fever problems. Early preparation for this condition may help alleviate symptoms later in the season, and again avoid interruption to a child's education. It is especially important that pupils sitting Public Examinations e.g. GCSE examinations, are able to do so free of the discomfort this problem can cause. **Seek medical help early.**

Parents/Carers of pupils with specific or serious allergies, which may require medication or emergency treatment, should contact the school to make individual arrangements via their child's Year Manager e.g. use of EpiPens.

Girls' Issues

A number of girls suffer from painful period pains each month and some also experience other symptoms, of varying degrees, such as nausea, vomiting and dizziness. Such symptoms can be distressing and debilitating and if they occur regularly **advice should be sought from a G.P and/or pharmacist.** Routine preparation in advance of difficulties every month can help pupils to continue with their education and avoid unnecessary absences.

Please consult your own Doctor, NHS helpline or local Medical Practice for all health issues.

Head lice

If your child experiences this problem please seek advice from local pharmacists. They can provide information about various preparations and techniques for getting rid of the lice and preventing recurrence.

Asthma

Please ensure that you have notified the school if your child is asthmatic. Your child should carry their inhalers at all times. Spare inhalers may be stored in school.

Support in School

We are keen, wherever possible, to offer support in school to any child with health issues, whether short or long term. It is essential that school is kept informed and up to date with any health difficulties. We can, in some circumstances, make referrals to the School Nursing Service, on your behalf. We are able to work and liaise with other health professionals to ensure disruption to your child's school life is kept to a minimum.

Informing School about ANY matter affecting your child

Many things happen outside school and in family life that can affect your child's physical and mental health and well being, such as bereavement, illness within a family or relationship break down. Please be assured that any

information passed to school is treated with sensitivity and is completely confidential.

School can be kept informed and updated (depending on how sensitive the information is) via –

The Year Manager, your child's Tutor or a note in the Pupil Planner.

The Pupil absence Line **Tel: 0113 887 3241** where you can leave a message at any time.

If you let us know there is a problem, we will do our very best to make arrangements to support your child.

Catholic Care provide support to school. A referral can be made in school to access this help for any pupil.

Attendance and Punctuality

- The proper place for you to be on a school day is at school.
- Time is precious. Make good use of it.
- Be on time for all lessons.
- Never be absent from a lesson without permission.
- Be in your tutor room at 8.55 am and 2.10 pm to be registered by your tutor.
- If you arrive in school after 9.05 am, go to reception and sign in.
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Parents/carers should report an absence on the **first day** you are away from school by:

- a. Using the direct line for reporting pupil absence 0113 887 3241
- b. If this is not possible, complete an Absence Note in this planner.
- c. The Attendance Officer may speak to you at any time regarding your attendance and punctuality.

What do we do about poor attendance?

- 1) We may contact parents on the first day of absence by text to mobile phones, landlines or email addresses. We send letters and text reminders if absences continue to be unexplained. Please remember the absence notes section in the Pupil Planner if you cannot ring in.
- 2) We meet with pupils, carry out home visits, hold meetings in school with parents where necessary and set targets with pupils in order to raise attendance levels.
- 3) We liaise with the Safer Schools' Police Officer, who may carry out home visits if a pupil has been absent and no reason has been given.
- 4) We will not authorise holidays in term time.
- 5) A referral may be made to our Attendance Improvement Officer, who monitors the attendance of pupils. He/she may also meet with your child in school and set an attendance target.
- 6) Parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice and eventually a fine for failing to carry out their responsibilities for regular school attendance. Some parents are also taken to Court, where if found guilty of an offence relating to their child's attendance, may face a large fine, imprisonment and a criminal record.

At Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School we prefer to work with parents in order to prevent legal proceedings. Contact, communication and cooperation between home and school are paramount to this. Thank you to all parents and carers, who regularly keep school informed about pupil absence, using our direct line on the first day their child is away.

887 3241

Messages can be left on the answer-machine at any time.

If your child is experiencing any difficulties in coming to school please contact your child's Year Manager. Schools cannot automatically authorise the absence of pupils who remain at home when there is an issue which needs discussing and resolving.

Unauthorised absence: a very useful check list!

We do not accept any of the reasons below for missing school:

a parent/carer/grandparent is ill;
a parent is using the child as a childminder, looking after younger brothers and sisters for example;
a pupil is supporting other members of the family;
a parent/grandparent wants company;
a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home;
it is the pupil's birthday;
a parent does not consider regular attendance as important;
a parent has taken the pupil shopping;
outing to visit relatives;
a parent/carer states they are unable to get their child to attend school;
a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser;
a pupil is in paid work;
a parent is waiting for a delivery or similar;
lack of school uniform;
holidays in term time;
weather conditions such as heavy rain;
a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter.

- **Please note that, as agreed in the High Court, the decision whether or not to authorise absences, rests with the school, not with the parent, carer or guardian.**

How To Report Pupil Absence

Contact school on the first day of your child's absence on 887 3241. You may leave a message on the voicemail at any time

Please have the following information ready:-

your name and relationship to the pupil
your child's name and Tutor Group,
date of absence

a reason for the absence

an expected date to return to school.

If the absence is expected to last longer than you first thought, please phone again to give an update and the expected date of return

It is important that School's records are up to date. Please let us know immediately if your landline, mobile or emergency contacts change. Ring 887 3240 with this information

Contact the School promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep your child away from school.

Reminder:

We expect that all pupils will attend school regularly and punctually. Being on time means registering in Tutor Group by 8.55a.m. and again in the afternoon by 2.10p.m. It is a pupil's responsibility to register twice a day. If your child arrives late for any reason, he or she must register at the school reception office on arrival.

Evidence provided by the Department for Education indicates that 17 days' absence in anyone school year equates to one GCSE grade lost at GCSE.