



St John's Catholic Primary School
BATH

'For everyone to shine, celebrate and grow'

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Head Teacher: Mrs A Bennett

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2018/19

Attendance Policy

We believe there are two main reasons why we should strive for maximum attendance and punctuality:

1. Every lesson in school is important in ensuring that our children achieve their potential
2. Attendance and punctuality are valuable life skills

At St John's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing high quality, engaging experiences and learning opportunities which enable all pupils, no matter what their strengths, to achieve their potential. In every lesson, every day, we aim to develop pupils' skills and understanding, carefully building on their prior knowledge and giving them the tools to succeed. Absence from any one of these lessons or experiences can cause anxiety for the child, as they feel that they have fallen behind, and may have an impact on a child's ability to succeed in the task that has been set. Frequent absence, or absence for blocks of time, will have a long lasting effect through the learning 'gaps' that are created in a child's understanding.

Furthermore, at our school we believe that attendance and punctuality are life skills which demonstrate an individual to be reliable, responsible and organised. It is the responsibility of the school and parents in partnership to prepare our children for the future and we believe that attitudes to attendance and punctuality developed at school will resonate throughout our children's life and chosen careers.

At St John's Catholic Primary School, we recognise the significant benefits of a partnership with parents that supports learning. Our shared vision is to be 'an excellent school' and our school commitment to this vision is represented by the high quality provision we have put in place for learning. We believe that a key way parents can contribute to this shared vision is by ensuring that all children have access to this learning by aiming for maximum attendance and punctuality. The parent and carer role in the Charter for Excellence provides clear guidance:

- **Help your child to achieve their potential by ensuring maximum attendance and punctuality**

Attendance records:

The school sets an annual target for attendance based on its previous attendance figures. We will report this target figure at the beginning of each academic year in our school newsletter. As with all areas of our school, we are aiming for excellence. Academically, our school performs well above the national average and we aim for our attendance figures to match this high standard.

Attendance is registered twice daily and absence, dependant on circumstances, is either authorised or unauthorised. A full school report is produced termly which is monitored by the school, and the Local Authority, in a termly visit by the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO).

It is Local Authority policy to send a letter to the parents of any child whose attendance is falling below 90% (equivalent to ½ day per school week) encouraging families to work with the school

to try and resolve attendance issues. The school is happy to offer advice and support as appropriate. Attendance will then be closely monitored for improvement and further support offered if required through greater involvement with the CMEO.

Punctuality:

The beginning of the school day is an important time to ensure that children are settled, organised and ready to start learning. Poor punctuality not only has an impact on an individual's ability to begin learning but can impact on the rest of the class if the class teacher has to spend time supporting late comers. At our school, Key Stage Two start at 8.45am, and Key Stage One start at 8.50am. Children entering school after 8.55am will be marked late. The Headteacher will contact the parents/carers of any child who is persistently late to discuss and aim to resolve any barriers that may be preventing a child from attending school on time.

Absence through illness:

If your child is unwell he/she will need time at home to get better. Parents can support other families by ensuring that children with contagious diseases (sickness bug, conjunctivitis, flu) are better before returning them to school. Further guidance is given in our Parent Handbook.

At these times, parents should contact the school at the earliest opportunity explaining the reason for absence. The school will be concerned if a child is frequently absent from school for short periods of time and will contact the parents/carers to discuss any issues and identify whether support could be provided (e.g. from the school nurse) to enable fuller attendance.

The school would follow guidance from the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) in cases of prolonged absence to ensure full support.

Reporting absence from school:

It is very important that the school is notified of the absence of a child from school at the earliest opportunity. Parents must ring the school office on 01225 303990 to report their child absent.

Planned absence from school:

From time to time, there may be some events in a child or family's life which fall in school time. The school has limited discretion in granting authorisation for absence which is created by exceptional circumstances. Following Government, and Local Authority guidance, schools must decide on an individual basis how the requirement for 'exceptional circumstances' should be implemented. For consistency, our school follows Local Authority policy guidance.

Regular planned absence:

There may be some circumstances where it is necessary for a child to be regularly absent from school (e.g. on a weekly basis). Reasons for this may include medical treatment or counselling. Should such circumstances arise, the parent would need to complete Appendix A Request for regular planned absence outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for such a request. In this case, the 'exceptional circumstances' will be required to prove that this absence is necessary because it supports a child in a way that is beyond current school provision.

Absence request for commitments other than holiday:

There are occasions where parents and carers will want to request a planned absence for their child from school other than holiday. At St John's Catholic Primary School we consider these reasons to include:

- exams or competitions

- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (although every effort should be made to secure routine doctor/dentist appointments out of school hours or during the holidays)
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement

For these absences, parents are required to complete the Appendix B Absence request for commitments other than holiday form outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for the request.

Where possible, this should be submitted to the school at least two weeks before the intended absence. In these cases, the Headteacher will consider the reasons provided by the parents/carers for the request and give written indication as to whether the request has been granted and authorised or refused. This will be done within two days of the request being submitted.

Holiday Absence Requests:

Parents and carers who wish to request holiday in term time are required to complete Appendix C Holiday Absence Requests form. This must be submitted at least six weeks before the intended absence and well before any holiday bookings are made. Any requests that are not submitted within these given requirements will automatically be refused. In line with Government and LA guidance, parents/carers will be required to outline the 'exceptional circumstances' which form the basis for their request.

These 'exceptional circumstances' are outlined in the LA policy as:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The school considers that any longer term absence is likely to have a negative impact on an individual's education.

Therefore, we will follow the policy as below:

1. The absence form must be accompanied by a letter from parents/carers outlining why the school should consider that this is a request with 'exceptional circumstances'.
2. Should there be any required clarification of the exceptional circumstances outlined in the absence request, then the Headteacher will contact the parents/carers.
3. Within one week of a parent/carer submitting a request for absence, a panel comprising the Headteacher and a school attendance Governor will meet to consider the proposed absence.
4. The panel will form a decision based on whether the request meets the guidance for 'exceptional circumstances' and, in the case of Year 6 pupils, the time of year the request is being made.
5. The panel will write to the parents/carers to inform them whether the request has been granted or refused.
6. The decision of the panel is final.

No leave will be granted to pupils in Year 6 during SATs week and the preparation time immediately before hand, that is, during Term 4.

If parents make the choice to take a child out of school when an absence has not been authorised, then the school will be required to follow Government and Local Authority guidance of recording it as an unauthorised absence, informing the CMEO and parents may risk a fine of up to £120 each per child.

Where a request for leave of absence has been made by a parent with whom the child resides, any estranged parent with parental responsibility (except where a court order restricts the sharing of such information with that parent – evidence will be required) will be advised of the request. The school will not become involved in disputes between parents over permissions surrounding the request. If the parent, on receipt of the notification, does not agree with the absence, then he/she may put in writing to the Headteacher notification to that effect. This will be given consideration should a Penalty notice be requested for the absence.

It will not be possible to provide work for a child to complete during their period of absence as we do not feel there is any substitute for quality learning within the classroom, or that the extra preparation required is a reasonable expectation to be placed on staff.

The major exception to all of this is the extended leave of absence for family, work or cultural reasons. In this case, authority for absence can be granted for up to six weeks, but only if early discussion (at least 3 months in advance) takes place about the advisability of such leave, and the extent of school advice needed for such a trip. It is important to understand that children who take extended leave of absence usually fall behind their peers in learning and this can have a long-term effect on their education, especially if it becomes a regular occurrence. Attendance at a local school whilst you are away on an extended visit therefore would be beneficial for at least some of the time, if that is possible. If parents wish to clarify any matter regarding this, they should contact the head teacher.

If a pupil fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed date, and the failure is not due to sickness or any unavoidable cause, their name could be removed from the register following appropriate checks by the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO).

We ask for parents' support in implementing this policy to provide the best possible education for all the pupils at St John's Catholic Primary School.

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix A – Request for regular planned absence

Appendix B – Absence request for commitments other than holiday

Appendix C – Holiday absence requests

Signed: Giles Mercer

Chair of Governors

Date Approved: 5.12.17

Due Review: 5.12.18



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Absence request for commitments other than holiday

Authorised absence is when the Headteacher approves an absence for reasons other than illness, according to Department for Education and Skills guidance. Unauthorised absence is when a child is absent without the Headteacher's permission. At St John's Catholic Primary School we believe that :

- Every lesson is important in ensuring that our children achieve their potential
- Maximum attendance and punctuality are valuable life skills

Please outline below your reason for this absence request with details outlining your 'exceptional circumstances'. Our school policy considers these areas to include:

- exams or competitions
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement.

Child's name : _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Please use the space provided to outline the planned absence (see guidance above) :

Signature of Parent/Carer : _____ Date: _____

Current Attendance: _____

Permission: Granted Refused

Headteacher's signature:

Date:



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Holiday Absence Requests

At St John's Catholic Primary School, in line with Local Authority policy, holiday absence requests are required to meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' outlined below :

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Please note:

The school will only authorise one holiday absence request per pupil, per academic year if there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The planned absence must be on consecutive days.

No leave will be granted to pupils in Year 6 during SATs week and the preparation time immediately before hand, that is, during Term 4.

If parents make the choice to take a child out of school when an absence has not been authorised, then the school will be required to follow Government and Local Authority guidance of recording it as an unauthorised absence, informing the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) and parents may risk a fine of up to £120 each per child.

Child's name : _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

Please attach a letter to this form outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' which have led to you making this holiday absence request (see guidance above).

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____ Date: _____

Current Attendance: _____

Permission: Granted Refused

Headteacher's signature: _____ Date: _____

