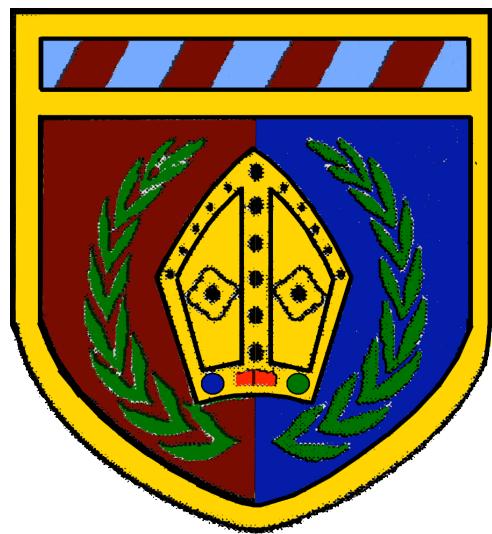


# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

“To live, love and learn and learn in our caring community”



## St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

### Policy on Attendance

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

#### **2 Definitions**

##### **2.1 Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

##### **2.2 Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer.
- The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

#### **3 If a child is absent**

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian on the first day of absence.

- 3.2 We request a phone call or a note should be brought from a parent/carer to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

#### **4 Requests for leave of absence**

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents and carers to contact the school or the Chair of Governors as soon as possible. This request will be considered by the headteacher/Chair of Governors on an individual basis to consider exceptional circumstances. Should the request be granted it will be recorded as authorised absence. The request may not be granted and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- 4.2 The Governing Body does not authorise holiday request during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any requests for holidays during term time should be put in writing to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The request will be considered, if exceptional circumstances are applicable the request will be granted and authorised absence will be recorded. All decisions to authorise requests are made on an individual basis at the discretion of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will respond in writing. If the request is declined, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence; if parents/carers still decide to take their children out of school, the school must inform the Children and Family First Team and Penalty Notices may be issued.

#### **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1 If an absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

#### **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem with the head teacher or the school will contact the Children and Family First Team or the appointed Attendance Officer who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis, Penalty Notices may be issued.

## **7 Rewards for good attendance**

- 7.1 We actively promote good attendance. The headteacher, Learning mentor and appointed Attendance Officer monitor attendance weekly. Each class with the highest attendance in a week will receive 10 minutes extra play. All names of all children who have achieved 98+% during the year will be added to a prize draw with the chance to win a voucher.

## **8 Attendance targets**

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA Education Improvement Adviser. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the termly governors' report.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents/carers.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Signed:**

**Date: September 2013**

