

	Policy No P.C.S	
	Issue No	8
	September 2022	

St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Attendance Policy

As a Catholic School we seek to work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure the best possible start for each child entrusted into our care. Regular attendance and punctuality are an essential part of this partnership.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Raise pupil achievement through promoting attendance and punctuality levels of 98% and above.
- Assist parents, carers and pupils through clear procedures and expectations for staff, parents and pupils regarding attendance.
- To safeguard vulnerable children through clear measures for dealing with absence and lateness.

Arrival Time

The school gates open at 8.30am. Children should arrive no later than 8.45am. The gates will be locked from 8.45am onwards.

Notification of Lateness or Absence

Parents should phone the office before 8.45am on the same day if the child is going to be late or absent. The reason for absence must be as specific as possible – e.g. eye infection rather than sick or unwell.

Children arriving after 8.45am should come to the School Office with an adult so that their attendance and reason for lateness may be recorded. The adult should use the electronic sign-in screen to record their child's arrival.

Registration Procedures

1. Registers will be taken twice daily, once for the morning session and once for the afternoon session.
2. Morning registers will be completed between 8:45am and 8:50am; afternoon registers will be completed at 12:50pm for FS2 and Key Stage 1 and 1.05pm for Key Stage 2.
3. Teachers/Teaching Assistants will mark pupils 'present' with an /or 'absent' with an N.
4. All 'N's will be checked against absence messages and late arrivals. First day absences who have not left a message will then be given a follow up call by 9.15am.
5. Arrivals after 8:45am are marked 'L'.
6. Arrivals after 9:15am are marked 'U'.
7. Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:
 - Registers provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils
 - They are legal documents that may be required in a court of law.
 - We have a duty to safeguard our pupils and non-attendance / poor attendance would give us cause for concern and investigation.

For this reason, all registers are checked by Senior Leaders and our Child Protection and Inclusion Officer for accuracy and timely completion shortly after registration closes.

Authorised Absence or Lateness

Only the school can authorise an absence.

1. Where the school is satisfied with the parent's explanation for the absence and there have been no previous issues with the child's absence or punctuality record the school will authorise the absence.
2. As long as children return to school straight after Doctor/Dentist appointments they are not counted as absences. The situation is the same for a child who leaves after registration for a good reason such as illness, visits to secondary schools etc.
3. Children should not be kept off for the whole day for medical appointments unless they are too unwell to attend, in which case the parent must contact the school confirming the reason for their absence the next day and it will be counted as an absence. Routine medical appointments such as dental and eye sight checks should be made out of term time.
4. The exceptional circumstances code will be considered for issues such as death in the family, moving house etc. Parents should contact the school in advance, wherever possible, about such requests for absence.

The admin staff will keep a record of the reasons given for all late arrivals and absences and these will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Child Protection and Inclusion Officer on a weekly basis. Other agencies, such as the Education Welfare Officer will be involved where lateness or absence is causing a concern.

Unauthorised Absence

The Child Protection and Inclusion Officer will contact the parents to express concern and advise the Headteacher accordingly when:

- No satisfactory explanation has been given to explain the lateness or absence.
- There is reason to doubt the accuracy of the reasons given for the lateness or absence.

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the home will be recorded. In the case of families deemed to be 'vulnerable', a home visit will take place. For all other families, should contact be unsuccessful, a home visit will take place on day two.

Absence Escalation Procedure

Attendance and Lateness is tracked on a weekly basis by the Headteacher and the Child Protection and Inclusion Officer.

<u>Absence Escalation Procedure</u>	
Initial Absence	First day calling – Phone call if no contact has been made with school. Home visits if no contact is able to be made.
Stage 1	95% and below – Initial concern letter to monitor attendance to be sent (monitor attendance for 6 weeks)
Stage 2	90% and below – Second concern letter to be sent to all. Medical proof required for all future absences (prescribed medicines, prescriptions, doctors' notes, appointment confirmation cards or texts and hospital letters). If not received, the absence will be unauthorised.
	Referral to Senior Staff at 90% - school meeting/home visit is needed – completion of Parent Agreement at 90%.
Stage 3	Further decline or 8 unauthorised sessions in a four week school period will result in referral to the Local Authority.
Stage 4	Local Authority action can result in 15 day notification. Further decline will result in court action.

<u>Late Escalation Procedure</u>	
Stage 1	90% and below – Initial concern letter to monitor punctuality to be sent (monitor punctuality for 6 weeks)
Stage 2	Continued 90% and below – Second concern letter to be sent to all (monitor punctuality for 2 weeks)
Stage 3	Further monitoring for 2 weeks. Referral to Senior Staff at continued 90% or below - school meeting/home visit is needed – completion of Parent Agreement at 90%.
Stage 4	Further decline or continued 90% or below punctuality record (will result in referral to the Local Authority.

Safeguarding

At St George's we believe in supporting the whole family; our first duty of care, however, is to the child; where there is any doubt regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child, we will report it immediately to Social Services. Our preferred option is an open and honest relationship with our parents or carers; if there are genuine problems please talk to us.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

We have adopted a zero tolerance with regards to holidays during term time; this is in line with the Local Authority and Government guidelines.

Government Legislation from September 1st 2013 states schools can only grant requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. No holidays during term time will be authorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances such as an immediate family members' bereavement. No other reasons – for example parents' shift working patterns, or parents' illness coupled with inability to take holidays count as exceptional circumstances.

Parents who take their children out of school during term time and the absence has not been authorised, may be issued with a Penalty Notice. We expect 100% attendance and punctuality except for very good reasons.

Amendments to the 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying penalty notices after they have been issued by Derby City Council. From 1st September 2013, parents must pay £120 per child and per parent within 28 days. However, if payment is made within 21 days, the fine will be reduced to £60 per child and per parent. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Absence, lateness and term time holidays will be recorded in the End of Year individual school report.

The School will encourage punctuality and good attendance through rewards such as house points and end of year prizes for 100% attendance.