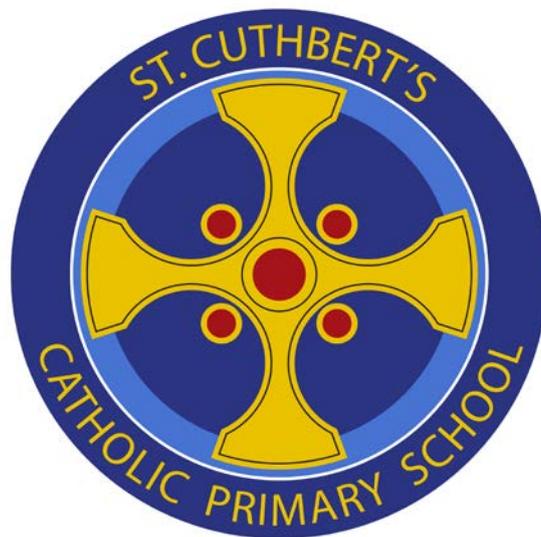


St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



Headteacher: Mr. Chris Wilkins
Deputy Head: Mr. Michael Merrick

Statement of intent

St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary school seeks to ensure that all its children receive a full- time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his or her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills they will need and reach their full potential. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff and parents can work in partnership.

Signed by:

_____	Headteacher	Date
_____	Deputy Headteacher	Date:
_____	Chair of Governors	Date:

First Ratified by Full Governing Body: October 2016

Review Date: Autumn 2017

1. Aims of the policy

- St. Cuthbert's School is committed to improving attendance, both amongst those whose attendance is poor (90% and below) and those attendance requires improvement (90-95%). This is for reasons stated above, and will comprise a key part of our School Development Plan.
- The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention when a problem is identified.
- The school will make appropriate and timely interventions on attendance issues, working with outside bodies where required, with a strong focus on persistent absence.
- All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and work closely with families to encourage good attendance.
- The school will encourage good attendance among children through a system of rewards.
- The school Governors will monitor attendance closely and work with the Executive Headteacher on attendance issues.
- We will ensure that all parents are aware of their legal obligations regarding attendance, and will support them in ensuring good attendance for their children.
- This policy is available on the school website and reminders will be published on newsletters, text messages and other communications.

2. Why regular attendance is so important

- Everyone in the school community needs to be aware of the result of poor attendance on children enjoying and achieving.
- Poor attendance can lower a child's confidence, self esteem, security at school and their academic success.
- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- **St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School will work together with parents and the Local Authority to improve attendance so we can all help all children to achieve their full potential.**

3. Promoting Regular Attendance

- Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, children and all members of school staff.
- To help us all to focus on this we will:
 - Share details on attendance in regular newsletters
 - Report to parents each term on how their child/ren is performing in school, their attendance percentage and punctuality rate, and how this relates to attainment
 - Celebrate good attendance by instituting competition between Year Groups, with the winners to be presented with the Attendance Trophy at the weekly Celebration Assembly
 - Award certificates for attendance each term – bronze, silver and gold.
 - Reward good or improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events for those with excellent attendance

4. Registering and monitoring attendance

- All registers are marked at the beginning of the **morning and afternoon sessions** in school. Teachers will perform this task as soon as the morning or afternoon session begins.
- The school will monitor attendance on a daily basis and will analyse attendance records once a week.
- Registers are recorded electronically and SIMS is able to give us an instant analysis of attendance and punctuality. This will be looked at by the Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head in the school each day.
- At the end of the academic year parents will be given a copy of their child's attendance record for the year. The Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head will also share the attendance record with parents throughout the year if there are concerns.
- Attendance will be discussed at Governing Body meetings and will be included in the Executive Headteacher's Termly Reports.
- The Emergency Contact and First-day Calling Procedures Plan shall be shared with all key stakeholders to ensure timely intervention on all pupil absence

5. Lateness

- The school policy is to encourage punctuality but actively discourage lateness as it seriously disrupts lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. If a child is late and misses

registration, a late mark will be recorded.

- The school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. A pupil who arrives late **must come to the office with their parents and the parents must sign a late register stating the time they arrived and the reason for being late.**

6. A) Managing Lateness

- Registers are marked by 9:00 a.m. and by 1:00 pm KS1, and 1.15pm KS2. The attendance register closes at 9:30 am for the morning session and 1:15pm KS1 or 1:30 pm KS2 for the afternoon session. A child will receive a late mark if they are not in class for these times.
- In accordance with absence Regulations, if a child arrives after the attendance register closes, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will be registered as an unauthorised absence. This may mean parents are liable to a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- If a child has a persistent late record, the parents will be asked to meet with the Executive Headteacher and/or Deputy Head to resolve the problem.
- If a child is late more than twice in one week a letter will be sent home, unless the school is aware of any exceptional circumstances
- *All letters concerning punctuality and attendance will be copied to the child's file.*
- If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Head.

B) Collection at the End of the School Day

- If a parent is late collecting their child, the child will wait outside the school office.
- When parents arrive to collect their children, they will have to sign them out and give a reason for being late. If a parent is going to be late, they should phone the school and inform them of when they will be arriving and why they are late.
- The school discourages late collection of children as it can be distressing for very young children and presents a staffing issue for the school.
- We understand there are exceptional circumstances when a parent or carer will be late, but if a persistent pattern of late collection arises the Executive Headteacher or Deputy will speak to parents and may write a letter home concerning late collection.
- If a child or children are not collected and their emergency contacts details are not current, or contact cannot be made with those listed on the contacts register, the school may choose to involve Social Services.

7. Types of Absence

- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - Truancy before or during the school day
 - Absences which have never been properly explained
 - Children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark
 - Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
 - Day trips and holidays in term time
 - Excessive illness absence without medical evidence
- Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993). This is consistent with national legislation. Categories of absence include:
 - **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as AUTHORISED. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be where confirmation has been received from the parents, or on production of an appointment card. The school will ask parents to try and make dental appointments outside school hours.
 - **Exceptional leave/holidays** – The governors will consider requests for holiday leave during term time. Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken without permission will be marked as UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.
 - **Family Bereavement** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events, and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.
 - If a child is sick on either side of a holiday the school may request medical evidence to show the child has been ill. This evidence may be a medical appointment card from the doctors.
 - Parents can support the school and their child/ren in improving attendance by:
 - Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
 - Helping with homework
 - Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
 - Providing a healthy breakfast
 - Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

8. Leave during term time

- Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.
- Remember that any savings that may be made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.
- Absence for holidays is down to the Headteacher and Governing Body's discretion. There is no entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday. Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken without permission will be marked as UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.
- The Executive Head and Deputy Head will monitor registers and will be looking at all unauthorised absences. Information about any parents who take unauthorised holidays will be passed on to the Participation Team who may issue each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child. The amount of each Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the notice(s) remains unpaid you will be summoned to the Magistrates Court and could be fined up to £2,500 for each offence.
- Where Parents/Carers that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices then take their child/ren out of school again without authorisation from the Headteacher, further Penalty Notices may not be issued. In these cases, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team for each parent/carer to be summonsed the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A), Education Act, 1996.

9. Managing Absence

- Attendance is monitored on a daily and weekly basis will also be monitored closely on a weekly basis.
- If the school has continued concern regarding the child's attendance after speaking to parents, the school will inform the Local Authority of their concerns.
- Those families referred to the Executive Head/Deputy Head may be involved in the Attendance Panel system, which involves the school taking early intervention when there is an area of concern regarding a child's attendance.
- During this process, Parents are informed of improvement that needs to be made over a specific time frame. Where parents fail to take their responsibilities seriously or no improvement is brought about in the child's attendance within a specific time frame, prosecution proceedings will be initiated.
- The attendance of those children involved in the Attendance Panel system will be monitored very closely.

a. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and parental support and co-operation is needed to tackle this.
- The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.
- PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our system, and this will be combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
- All our PA children and their parents are subject to Action Plans. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority.

b. Missing Children

- It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.
- If the school has concerns about a child who is missing we will report our concerns to the relevant agencies.

c. Telephone numbers

- There are times when we need to contact parents about different matters, including absence, so the school must have up-to-date contact details at all times.
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of updated contact details
- Where an issue arises with contact details, the school will seek to communicate with the parent at the end of the day, or through other means, to establish new contact details
- There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

10. Absence procedure

If a child is absent, the parent must:

- Contact school as **soon as possible on the first day of absence and every day during the illness.**
- Send a note, an email or telephone communication on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – this is important, even if the parent has already communicated with the school during the absence.

If a child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence if no communication has been received.

- A member of staff will visit home to ensure that our Safeguarding Policy is being fulfilled.
- Invite the parent in to school to discuss the situation with the Executive Head teacher or Deputy Head if absences persist.
- Consider referral to the Local Authority if attendance moves below 91%.
- Follow the steps outlined in the Emergency Contact and First-day Calling Procedures Plan
- The school will always support parents who have difficulty with writing letters.

11. School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

- The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** and the school will keep parents updated regularly about progress toward this level, and how their child's attendance compares with their peers.
- Our target is to achieve even higher than this standard, as we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our children can be amongst the best in Carlisle.
- Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and will analyse data to identify any particular patterns of absence, either in individual pupils or groups of pupils.
- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information

12. Summary

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and punctual each day.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and children to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising a child's attainment.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, and will be subject to review if there are any legislative changes or changes concerning pupil attendance or.