

ST JOHN'S SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE A CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Attendance Policy



Reviewed: September 2013

To be reviewed:

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. The link between attainment and attendance is very clear, and it is the responsibility of both the school and Parents/Carers to ensure that our young people attend school every day in order to maximise their learning opportunities.

Schools play a key role in ensuring that all students attend. There is a strong link between the climate for learning within schools and rates of attendance and achievement. When the learning experience is engaging, enjoyable, appropriately challenging and supportive, when it takes place within a calm and safe environment, then students are more likely to achieve through higher levels of attendance. A school with a positive climate for learning will have a direct impact on the standards of attainment and achievement where behaviours are conducive to effective teaching and learning. Clearly then, the life chances of all students will be affected by their levels of attendance and by the behaviours that take place in the classroom.

Aims

- The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which students, staff, parents/carers and the Attendance Officer can work in partnership.
- The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.
- All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and pastoral staff will liaise with the home and other agencies about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

Principles

A child should come to school every day.

- A child should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable". Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. (This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required).
- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes:
 - going shopping
 - looking after the house
 - truancy
 - absences which have never been properly explained
 - taking holidays in term time
 - children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the Parents/Carers and the student. It is never better

to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together.

Procedures

If a child is unfit for school, Parents/Carers should contact the school on the first day, in person or by telephone. When the child returns, he or she must bring a written note, signed by a parent, for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which are unavoidably in school time, provided a written explanation is received. Students need to obtain permission from the Head of Year in these circumstances before they leave school and must sign out at the office.

1. Holidays in term time

All holiday leave which causes absence in term time cannot be authorised. Taking a two week holiday in term time means your son/daughter could not achieve more than 94% attendance in that academic year. Parents/Carers are asked not to book holidays in term time as authorization can only be given in extremely exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher as laid down in government guidelines 2014.

2. Truancy

Parents/Carers will be informed whenever the school uncovers truancy or post registration truancy. Students who do leave school without permission in these circumstances will have sanctions imposed on them, such as detention, so that they can make up the work missed.

3. Lateness

Students must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than fifteen minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. Students need to arrive before 9.10 am after which the register will be closed. Parents/Carers will be notified if there is a recurring pattern of lateness and it is school policy to use the sanction of detention if a child is late without a good cause.

4. Monitoring attendance

Declining attendance and truancy will be closely monitored by school staff. A staged response will be initiated by the school, after which the situation will be referred to the LA. This can lead to court appearances if parents/carers do not ensure their children's attendance in school.

5. Missed Work

It is expected that in all cases of absence students will catch up with work missed at the earliest opportunity.

6. Special Circumstances

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the student and parents/carers to help in any way possible.

7. Re-integration

The school has arrangements to re-integrate students who have been absent for extended periods. In such cases each student will be treated individually and arrangements will be made that are most appropriate to the circumstances.

8. Rewards

- The school will celebrate 100% attendances by presenting students with award certificates and prizes as appropriate.
- A high level of attendance would merit a strong supportive reference from the school to future employers in appropriate circumstances .

9. Attendance Registers

The school will follow the guidance on completion of attendance registers outlined in DfE guidelines and appropriate codes will be entered for all students.

School Responsibility

- To maintain attendance registers as required by law and to use DfE statutory codes.
- To analyse attendance data for patterns and trends and use the information to inform policy, procedures and activity.
- To set and monitor challenging targets, which will ensure that overall attendance is at or above the DfE target median.
- To have a comprehensive Attendance policy which details attendance procedures and the actions the school will take in the event of a student's attendance becoming problematic. The policy will include details of
 - When the school will "authorise" absence
 - The school's attitude towards holidays in term-time
 - The school's policy on attendance and punctuality
 - Rewards for good attendance and sanctions for truancy or unauthorised absence
 - Criteria for referral to the Attendance Team
 - Communications with Parents/Carers

Parents and Carers Responsibility

Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act the parent/carer is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient fulltime education that is suitable for the child's age ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by elective home education (the parent/carer can choose to educate their child at home).

Parents/carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. To help their children parents/carers can:

- Take an active interest in their child's school life and work.
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Always notify the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to go to school and refer to the Attendance Officer or other appropriate agencies for additional support.
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time
- Ensure that their child completes his homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time
- Attend, where possible, parents' evenings and other school events
- Be aware of letters from school that their child brings home.

Parents/Carers are required to secure education for their children either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, and failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them. Under the Education Law, carers have the same legal responsibilities as parents and are subject to the same processes. If a child is registered at school, parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of school age receive suitable education.

Monitoring and evaluation

The policy is ratified by the Governing body and reviewed regularly so that changes in legislation and school practice are accurately reflected.

December 2011

Reviewed September 2013