



# Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary School

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## Attendance Policy

### MISSION STATEMENT

To be a community of learners, believers and friends rooted in the values and teachings of the Gospel. We seek to enable every individual to develop to his or her full potential in the knowledge that we are uniquely created and loved by God.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Schools are required to report all absence figures to the Local Authority and the DFE in addition to ensure that they are recorded on the children's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by OFSTED as part of a school's inspection on the Safeguarding of Children.

The Local Authority becomes very concerned if a pupil's attendance goes below 85% and penalty notices (see Section 6) may be issued.

**All holidays during term time will be considered 'unauthorised leave of absence' and no permission will be given.** If exceptional circumstances arise and a family needs to request 'leave of absence' in term time then an 'Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances' must be completed (at least 2 weeks' notice should be given). This form can be obtained from the school website or the school office.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, leave of absence cannot be granted unless (i) an application had been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and (ii) the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the "**exceptional circumstances**" relating to that application. If the leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation from the school, it will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. The Education Welfare Service may be informed and they may issue a penalty notice or take the matter further (see Section 6 for more details)

Regular and punctual attendance is important, without it the efforts of the best teachers and schools come to nothing. We wish to work closely with parents whose responsibility it is to ensure that their children receive full time education. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. It is our responsibility to support attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

## **1. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW**

### **1.1 Parental Responsibility**

Parents/carers whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at the school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served a penalty notice.

### **1.2 School Responsibility**

Schools are required to report all absence figures to the Local Authority and the DFE, and to ensure they are recorded on the children's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by OFSTED as part of a school's inspection.

## **2. EXPECTATIONS**

### **2.1 The Governors' expectations of Parents/Carers**

The Governors expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school punctually.
- Ensure that they contact the school every day of the absence, for safeguarding reasons.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away.
- Notify the school immediately of any change to contact details.

### **2.2 The Governors' expectations of the School**

The Governors expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children.
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Follow up unexplained absences or lateness to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and Local Authority's expectations regarding school attendance.

- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to refer cases where there are concerns around attendance. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by EWO may result in further actions (e.g. an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution).
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition. Certificates will be awarded for attendance, 100% (gold) and 99% (silver) each term.

### **2.3 Keeping Records**

- Class Teachers will maintain the pupils' register according to the instructions printed in the register.
- In the morning, registers will be closed 30 minutes after the start of the school day.
- Registers are taken upon entry into class at 8.50am. Any child arriving between then and 9.25am will be marked as late (L). Registers close at 9.25am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence (U) - late after close of register, which counts as a statistical absence, or coded accordingly dependent on the reason for the late arrival.
- In the afternoon, registers will be closed immediately after marking.
- Children arriving after the register has been closed (marked) will be marked late. If there is not a good reason, this may be marked as an unauthorised absence.

### **2.4 Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on the roll but not present in school must be recorded within one of these two categories:

#### **2.4.1 Authorised Absence**

The list of Authorised Absences includes:

- Genuine illness
- Genuine family crisis
- Unavoidable cause

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

#### **2.4.2 Unauthorised Absence**

The list of Unauthorised Absences may include:

- Holidays during term time
- Absences that have not been explained
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers are closed without a good reason

- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

### 3. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

#### 3.1 Family Holidays

- We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates.
- If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation of the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare Service may be informed.

#### 3.2 Dental and Medical Treatments

- Wherever possible, please book dental and medical appointments outside of the school day.
- When appointments during school hours are **unavoidable**, the school office should be notified in writing of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school and by whom.
- Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

### 4. PENALTY NOTICES

#### 4.1 Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances :-

1. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more). **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 stated that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.** In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body have to judge whether there are exceptional circumstances and may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance. This will be considered if the attendance is below 85% and there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the education welfare officer.

## **5. MONITORING ABSENCE**

- Parents are requested to inform the school by phone on every day of the absence, and then send in a note of explanation when the child returns to school.
- The School Office transfers information on a weekly basis, from the registers on to the attendance programme on the computer.
- The School will send a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence, if no reason has been given to the school. A record of this is kept to ensure that all absences are accounted for.
- If a child is absent for 10 days with no explanation and no contact from parents, the school has a statutory duty to refer to the EWO and that a period of unauthorised absence could lead to a child losing their place.

## **6. MONITORING LATENESS**

- It is essential that pupils arrive to school on time. Pupil's achievement is directly influenced by attendance and punctuality and suffers when attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Cardinal Newman aims to encourage all pupils to achieve their potential through regular attendance and punctuality.
- Parents are encouraged to get their children to school for 8.45am (children are lined up and ready for lessons at 8.50am).
- Registers are taken immediately in class. Any child arriving between then and 9.25am will be marked as late (L). Registers close at 9.25am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence (U) - late after close of register, which counts as a statistical absence, or coded accordingly dependent on the reason for the late arrival.
- Poor attendance and punctuality is monitored and followed up swiftly.
- Teachers and office staff will inform the Headteacher of any concerns that they may have regarding children who are often late.

- If a pupil is late on 5 occasions in a half-term, then the parents may be invited to meet with the Headteacher or Deputy to discuss the issues surrounding their child's punctuality.
- If lateness persists then the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may become involved.

**Approved by: Resources Committee on 26 June 2014**

**Reviewed: March 2017**

**Review Date: March 2019**