



**ST MARY'S
COLLEGE**



Attendance Matters

A Parent Guide

Produced by: St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust
Date: October 2019
Next review 2021



St Cuthbert's
ROMAN CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

INTRODUCTION

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust encourages families to strive for 100% attendance and to achieve no less than 97%

The law requires parents and carers to ensure that their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and on time.

The government expects St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust to promote good attendance, reduce absence and act early to address patterns of absence

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We will:

- update families regularly with attendance information for their child(ren)
- encourage the development of good attendance habits for families with children right from the Early Years Foundation Stage
- highlight the importance of attendance with pupils through achievement and awards
- support families through early considered intervention when attendance becomes cause for concern

We ask you to:

- ensure that your child(ren) comes to school every day and on time
- talk to us should difficulties arise so that we can help to ensure your child(ren)'s education is not interrupted and that they can continue to attend school regularly
- update us when emergency contact telephone numbers change for your child(ren) as it is essential we maintain prompt and effective communication with home

PUNCTUALITY

Our school day starts promptly at **8:45am** and morning registration closes at 9:10am

Your child will be marked 'late' if they arrive into school before registration closes (8:46 am – 9:10am).

Our afternoon session starts promptly at 1.30 pm and registration closes immediately. If your child has been taken out for an appointment, please ensure their prompt return to school.

Lateness to school can be a very upsetting and isolating experience for a child who may feel awkward arriving into a classroom when everyone else is settled. They also miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of a lesson and are less prepared for learning

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Please make every effort to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours

Where this is not possible, please ensure that your child is present for morning and afternoon registration

Missing registration(s) may be recorded as an unauthorised absence(s) unless evidence of the appointment is presented

For children with medical conditions, we work flexibly with families in managing medical absence so that children are not penalised for their attendance record

ABSENCE

If your child is to be absent from school due to illness – or without prior permission – we request that you contact us by telephone – or via the school app – by no later than 8:45am on the first day of absence **and every day thereafter**.

Without justifiable reason, absence without prior notice from home and absence without satisfactory explanation is recorded as unauthorised.

To avoid unauthorised absence due to illness, please be aware that:

- most children are fine to attend school with a cold or minor ailment and we would ring you if required
- with your authority – and at the Head of School's discretion – staff can administer medication within school in line with the school's Medical Policy (see school website)
- a child can attend school **24 hours** after their last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea if you consider them well enough. In the case of a bug – and in line with NHS guidelines – it would be appropriate to extend their time away for an additional day (48 hours)
- following an episode of head-lice, a child should attend school immediately after the appropriate treatment is applied

For prolonged or persistent absence due to illness, or where the authenticity of illness is in doubt, you will be asked to provide medical evidence such as prescription medication or a medical letter

(NB. You will not be expected to request medical certificates from a GP where these incur a charge)

TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right and can only be granted by the Head of School under exceptional circumstances as determined by the Trust Directors. It is always strongly discouraged to prevent a child missing valuable learning and falling behind.

Exceptional circumstance criteria will focus on:

- arrangements for access determined by a Court Order
- Service personnel and other employees where annual leave is dictated by an employer
- acute family crisis
- religious observance

Providing at least one month's notice, an application should be made to the Head of School using the correct form available from the school office. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to within 10 days of receipt.

EXTENDED ABSENCE

If a pupil is absent for 20 days or more – for example due to an extended family holiday abroad – and in line with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service protocols, the school reserves the right to remove the pupil from the school's pupil roll

You must understand that the school could only re-admit your child(ren) if a place(s) was available

ENSURE THAT WE CAN CONTACT YOU

In all cases, unexplained absence without contact is a significant safeguarding concern and the school will deploy any means necessary to promptly establish the whereabouts of a child missing from school. This will typically involve a 'same day' home visit and may additionally involve contact with the Police; the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service and Children's Services.

When the Education Welfare Service determines that a pupil is a 'child missing from education', the child is removed the school's pupil roll requiring a parent/carer to re-apply for a school place.

PENALTY NOTICE FINES

When it has not been possible to avoid or improve unauthorised absence for a pupil, the school adheres to the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Practice in making recommendations for the issue of Penalty Notice fines. A fine is £60 (per child, per parent) if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 (per child, per parent) to be paid within 28 days with payment made to the Local Authority. Further information – including the right of appeal – can be found on the Hull City Council website at:

<http://www.hull.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-absence>

The school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service if:

- your child accumulates an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence due to being regularly late for school
- your child accumulates an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence due to being regularly absent from school without notice; where the authenticity of absence/illness is in doubt and where patterns of absence emerge
- you proceed with a term-time leave of absence that is taken without prior application to the Head of School or the absence has only been partially/not approved

LEGAL INTERVENTION!

If a Penalty Notice fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority decides either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or to withdraw the notice

A child's regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. Where it has not been possible to satisfactorily improve attendance through the Penalty Notice Regulations – and under recommendation from the school – the Local Authority has the delegated authority to arrange issue of a summons to a parent/carer where there is evidence to support the commission of an offence

PLEASE REMEMBER

If you have any attendance; illness or absence-related queries or concerns, then please do not hesitate to contact the school office on **01482 851136**

We are always here to help and support you and your family!