

Attendance Policy

Name of School	St Edward's Catholic Primary School
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1. Introduction

This Policy represents our school's commitment to strive for 100% attendance, in order to maximise our pupil's educational achievement, social development and to improve their life chances and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. It sets out the principles, procedures and practices the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for and benefits of good attendance.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to increase pupils and parent's awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and pupils are kept safe and healthy
- Acting early to address patterns of absence in order to promote good habits from an early age
- Keep good time keeping and ensuring children have all necessary equipment ready to start the day

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend as near full-time as possible and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.



4. School Procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date and time on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session (See below for times). The registers will remain open for 30 minutes.

The morning registration period will start at 8:45 am and end at 9:15 am in the Nursery
The morning registration period will start at 8:55 am and end at 9:25.am in KS1 & KS2

The afternoon registration period will start at 12:10 pm and end at 12:40 pm in the Nursery
The afternoon registration period will start at 1:00 pm and end at 1:30 pm in KS1

The afternoon registration period will start at 1:30 pm and end at 2.00 pm in KS2

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4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each and every day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00 am (See also section 7). The school website has an attendance tab which can be used to report absence – this is checked every day.

Telephone messages can also be left on the school's answer machine and must include the name of the pupil, class and reason for absence. If a child is off sick for more than 15 days the Local Authority will be notified, this can be constative or accumulated.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance, unauthorised absences are referred to the local authority and can result in a penalty notice charge or court prosecution.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences with a copy of the appointment card, without the appointment card this will be marked as an unauthorised absence, however, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period of 09.30 will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed 09.30 or later will be coded U (Late after register close) which is an absent mark. After a sixth lateness (L), a letter will be posted home informing the parents that following the next lateness, an appointment will be made with a member of the Early Help team.

After five late after registers close (U) a letter will be posted home informing the parents that following the next lateness, a penalty notice charge may apply and the local authority will be informed.

Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 5.

Punctuality

THE SCHOOL DAY STARTS AT 8.55 AM FOR CHILDREN IN RECEPTION TO YEAR 6

The playground gates will open at 8.45 am and will be closed at 8.55 am. Children arriving after this time will need to use the gate at the front of the school on Green Street. The registers are taken at

9.00 am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as late (L). Registers remain

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open for 30 minutes after this time 09.30 will be coded (U) late after registers close.



It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise school work for the rest of the day.

School Times NURSERY

Morning – 8.45 to 11.45 am

30 hour Nursery – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

Afternoon – 12.10 to 3.10 pm

RECEPTION

8.45 am to 3.10pm

KS1

Year 1 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

Year 2 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

KS2

Year 3 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

Year 4 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

Year 5 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

Year 6 – 8.45 am to 3.10 pm

ALL CLASSES ARE INVITED INTO SCHOOL FOR SOFT START FROM 8.45 AM

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Collection from School

Please collect your children promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. Where late collection is persistent and/or persistently late, the school is obliged to any uncollected pupil to a place of safety i.e. the local police station. We may have to share concerns with other agencies including Newham Children's Services. If you are running late or unavoidably obtained, please keep the school office informed and respond to any calls from the school.

Pick Up Arrangements

Please inform the school office at the start of the school day or as soon as possible if there are any changes to your regular pick up arrangements, this can be done verbally or written via e mail to the school info account – info@st-edwards.newham.sch.uk

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Leavers

If your child is leaving St Edward's parents are asked to inform the school office in

writing. This will include details about the new school and date of leaving. When pupils leave suddenly and we do not have any information about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This means that the Local Authority have a legal duty to carry out investigations which will mean liaising with Newham Children's Services, the police and other agencies to try and locate your child.

4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. If the school does not receive notification the School Attendance Team will call the parents and send e mails in order to try to ascertain the reason. If no contact is made, a member of the senior leadership team will conduct a home visit. (See appendix 2 for further details)

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance record annually in the written end of year report.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for exceptional term-time absence

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional – this will be a maximum of 10 days only.
- Out of school programs such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs"

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- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Head teacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Head teacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Head teacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) **The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).**
- 2) **Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).**
- 3) **Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).**

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child/family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEND
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expect parents not to take children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Head teacher should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

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APPLYING FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE:

*Notifications for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangements being made, this will allow sufficient time for the notification to be considered by the school. The notification should be made in writing (letter/email) by the parent or carer.

*term time leave notifications should include specific start and end dates, as this will formally constitute the leave period.

*term time leave notifications should also give a full reason as to why the leave is considered exceptional.

*parents/carers who are indenting to travel abroad with their child during term time should not book travel prior to securing approval from the school.

*any changes to dates agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorization prior to travel.

*the head teacher's decision is final!

FAMILY EMERGENCY- WHERE SCHOOL HAVE NOT BEEN NOTIFIED OF LEAVE IN ADVANCE

*There will be some occasions where it has not been possible for the parent/carers to notify the school of exceptional term time leave in advance. Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents/carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity to inform of the absence and the reason for this in writing. Exceptional term time Leave cannot be back dated so will be automatically unauthorised if not informed on the 1st day of leave, this leave is then still only granted by the head teacher if considered exceptional, the head teachers decision is final

*parents/carers taking their children out of school due to a family emergency are encouraged to consider: that they have considered the impact and appropriateness for their child, whether or not alternative care arrangements could be made for the child to remain in school, e.g. stay with an extended family member; that they have looked at limiting the amount of time absent from school.

Child fails to return following leave during term time – NO CONTACT RECEIVED FROM PARENTS

The school should write to the parent if the child fails to return to school on the date they were expected. The letter should give the parent/carers 10 school days to make contact with the school to explain the absence and for the child to return to school. If the child has failed

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to return to school after those 10 days, the school undertakes the usual CME(child missing in education) checks and if the school still have not heard from the family, then a CME notification will be completed with the local authority.

Child fails to return following leave during term time – CONTACT RECEIVED

The school's next step will depend on the explanation given to the school for the continued absence.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school (10 sessions/5 school days) or persistent lateness (6 U codes), where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice for the 1st time, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. A 2nd penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 per child per parent, if paid within 28 days, a 3rd penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the head teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. As of the 19th of April 2021 penalty notices can now be requested from Newham for children with poor attendance and those taking unauthorised leave during term time.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6.Strategies for promoting attendance

The Trustees, Head teacher and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

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7.Attendance monitoring

The Early Help team regularly collect attendance data for internal purposes, for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. Parents are expected to call the school or use the school website in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). If a pupil's absence goes above 8 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The diagram below shows what good attendance is and the threshold for when attendance becomes a concern.

Once at 97% attendance an email is sent to parents/carers

- If attendance is still at 97% or below a 1st letter is sent to parents/carers
- If attendance does not improve a 2nd letter is sent to parents/carers
- Then a meeting is arranged with the parents/carers and a 6-week review period is set. During this 6-week period if any further absences occur then the school will require proof of evidence from a medical professional that the child is ill. If no evidence is provided after 3 days, then this will be an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority can issue a penalty charge notice.

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If the absence is more than 30 sessions (15 days) then this will be referred directly to the Local Authority which could result in court proceedings



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8.Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Early Help team

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues Advises the head teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Any absence information they are given by a parent the night before an absence **MUST** be recorded in the office file so that the office can record correctly. Records of letters from parents detailing absence are kept in the office and are checked annually for re-distribution every September.

8.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They are expected to check the file daily for any reported absences to teachers. They must ensure all requests for absence are brought as a letter of request to the head teacher and they will ensure the decided the action is recorded on ARBOR and class teachers are fully informed. They inform the safeguarding team and inclusion leader of any vulnerable children who are absent. They are expected to ensure all register marks are completed daily and produce a weekly report for the Inclusion leader to review attendance figures.

9.Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team. Where necessary the review will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Authorised codes	
/\	/ Present (am) \ Present (pm)	Pupil is present at registration
L	Late Arrival	Late arrival before the register is closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity, safeguarding measures must be in place
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview	Pupil has leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another education institution
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity, but not provided by the school. safeguarding measures must be in place.
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement, safeguarding measures must be put in place.
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provisions have been made
K	Attending education provision	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
I	Illness	School has been notified that the pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

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Authorised absence codes cont....

<u>Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Scenario</u>
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in parents religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
C	Special circumstance	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Q	Access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
C2	Part time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend school i.e. nursery/6 th form
Y1	Transport	Pupil is unable to attend due to transport normally provided
Y2	Travel disruption	Pupil is unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part school closure	Pupil is unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Whole school unexpectedly closed	Pupil is unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend due to pupil being in the criminal justice system

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Y6	Public health guidance	Pupil is unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause	Pupil is unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause
	ADMIN CODES	
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half- term/bank holiday/INSET day
	Unauthorised absence codes	
N	Reason not yet provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not granted by the school
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for pupil absence
U	Arrival after registration closed	Pupil has arrived after the register closed



Appendix 2: Following Up absences procedures

First Day Absence Procedures:

After checking registers, carry out the Pre-Checks for first morning absences for any pupils not in school:

1. Check the answer machine
2. Check the school website attendance tab
3. Check the absence file of any verbal messages given to teachers
4. Check the late register
5. Check the Holiday request forms
6. Check classes

At 10.00, if pupil has not arrived and there is still no reason for the absence:

- Call parents/first contacts
- If no response, call second contact, if appropriate
- If after 15 minutes there is still no response, send a e mail
- If still no response following a further 15minutes, send another e mail and alert a member of the Early Help team
- If the absence still remains unexplained by 11.00 a home visit will be arranged by the Early Help team

HOME VISITS:

Two members of staff (including a member of SLT) will attend the home visit.

A letter of concern will be prepared to be posted at the address should there be no answer.

This will inform parents to contact school by the end of the day and at the latest the following morning.

At the property, staff will send an email message to school confirming they are outside the pupil's home.

Staff will knock or ring at least 3 times at the home and if there is no answer, post the letter.

As the staff leave the property, they will send a email message to the office.

If no contact has been made, the DSL must be informed, who will consider whether triage/police will need to be notified.

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