

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Walbottle



## Attendance Policy

At St Cuthbert's we live and learn in faith and love,  
through Jesus's teachings.

Our school is a place where we can grow as a family,  
helping each other to lead full and happy lives.

Consultation that has taken place	
Date Formally Approved By Governors	November 2021
Date policy Became Effective	November 2021
Review Date	June 2022
Person Responsible for Implementation and Monitoring	HT ✓      Govs      Admin      ✓

# Our School Attendance Aspiration is 100%

## Our School Attendance Target is 97%

Our school policy takes into account the guidance set out in the DfE Document 'School Attendance; Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020'.

### Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is essential if children are to make the best of the opportunities available to them in school and achieve their potential. Children with significant levels of absence from school are at much greater risk of becoming socially excluded and disadvantaged.

The school will take all necessary steps to support high levels of attendance and punctuality for all children at St Cuthbert's, and will work with parents to achieve these outcomes.

We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled children and the children of disabled parents. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity to enable these children to participate fully in school life, and will ensure that our policy and procedures for attendance support the achievement of our aims in relation to disabled pupils. (See Disability Equality Scheme).

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence:

- ❖ Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- ❖ Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)

### Guidelines

#### 1. Parents' Responsibilities

- (i) Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- (ii) Parents should ensure that if their child is absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school by 9:30am on the first morning of absence. This may be done by email, by phone, by letter or in person. If the child is still unwell on the third day of absence then the parent should contact school again to give an update on the situation. A letter explaining the absence should be sent into school upon the child's return. The school will decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a child were kept off school for a birthday, then the parents would be informed. A note is essential for the authorisation of absence.
- (iii) Parents may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. If parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record the absence as unauthorised. Letters will be sent to parents every half term regarding unauthorised absence requesting a reason to be provided.

- (iv) Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (8.55 a.m.). If a child arrives after 8.55 a.m. then they need to report directly to the school office to ensure that they are marked as present. The office keeps a record of children arriving late i.e. after 8.55 a.m. If a child is persistently late then a letter will be sent home requesting a reason for lateness.

## 2. School Responsibilities

- (i) The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- (ii) Registers will be taken twice daily (at 8.55 a.m. and at 1.15 p.m.). Registers will close at 9.00 a.m. and at 1.20 p.m. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session.
- (iii) Registers are completed electronically. The admin officer reviews the attendance information at 9:30 to check which children are absent and identify any parents / carers that need to be contacted where the reason for the absence isn't known. Where there are concerns about an absence or a child's overall attendance these will be passed on to the head teacher and attendance officer.  
**WHERE NO CONTACT IS RECEIVED FROM PARENTS AFTER THE OFFICE HAVE MADE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE, A HOME VISIT IS CARRIED OUT BY THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER.**
- (iv) Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality they will speak to the Head Teacher.
- (v) All absence notes from parents should be passed on to the admin officer.
- (vi) Attendance of less than 90% is regarded as a concern and is likely to result in follow-up action e.g. a letter to parents highlighting the school's concerns, a request for parents to discuss the child's attendance with the head teacher and the attendance officer.  
**PARENT CONTRACTS ARE OFFERED TO ATTEMPT TO WORK WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND TO PREVENT CHILDREN FROM FALLING INTO THE PERSISTENT ABSENTEE CATEGORY OF ATTENDANCE (UNDER 90%).**
- (vii) The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
  - regular contact with parents where there are concerns;
  - positive feedback to individual children for high or improved attendance;
  - clear information for parents e.g. at induction meetings for new Reception children and class welcome meetings.
- (ix) School staff are vigilant to the possibility that poor attendance and/or punctuality may be part of a wider picture which may indicate possible safeguarding issues. (Refer to the school's Child Protection Policy).

## Completing the Register

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement. Registers are completed electronically via Sims Attendance.

### TEACHER RECORDS

- ❖ Black diagonal line to denote presence
- ❖ O for unauthorised absence
- ❖ N no reason given for absence
- ❖ Daily attendance figures completed on Sims

### ADMIN STAFF RECORD

- ❖ Weekly/half termly report
- ❖ Weekly attendance figures
- ❖ Computerized input of absence information

At St Cuthbert's we follow a traffic light system. The purpose of colour coding helps Staff, Parents and children to have a clear understanding of our expectations.

- **Red Zone: under 92%**  
Children in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and misbehave. Legal action may be taken against the parent/carer of red zone children.
- **Amber Zone: 92%- 96.99%**  
Children in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to their absence level. Children who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. If your child is in the Amber Zone we will contact you to complete a Parent Contract to help avoid attendance falling into the Red Zone.
- **Green Zone: 97%+**  
We expect children to have green attendance throughout their education. Those children in green are more likely to do well in examinations, have developed strong friendships and ultimately have better career opportunities.

### 3. Rewards and Recognition

Although good attendance is an expectation for all, the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives, this may include:

- 100% Attendance certificates
- Prizes
- Additional Playtimes
- Class Trophy

- School/Class events

### **Family Holidays during term time**

**From September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 holidays in term time (unless exceptional circumstances) cannot be authorised by the Headteacher as there has been a change in the advice from the Government.**

Pupils' absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons after their return. There is possible risk of under-achievement which we all must seek to avoid. Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. If they do have to ask for permission to take their child out of school they must give the school at least two weeks' written notice, meet with the Headteacher and not book any holiday/flights etc. before this meeting has taken place. Requests for leave absence forms can be obtained from the school office (See Appendix 1).

A penalty notice may be issued from the Local Authority to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days, which increases to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remain unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

It is particularly important that parents do not plan for their child to be absent when SATS or examinations are taking place. Such absence would mean that their child is not assessed and the school's overall performance will suffer.

**Low attendance figures mean 'requires improvement' or even 'special measures'** therefore, Ofsted use attendance as a limiting factor. This means that no matter how hard the parents, staff and governors work to improve the school, we cannot be judged as good or outstanding without good attendance.

### **Referral to Attendance Service**

Ofsted will question the measures taken by the school in targeting individual pupils with low attendance. Currently if your child has only 7 days of absence, even if this is authorised due to sickness, this places them in the '*Amber*' (cause for concern) category. The school will be expected to show the measures they have in place and follow with regard to children who fall into the '*Amber*' or '*Red*' categories. The school will be working closely with the Attendance service and our Attendance Officer when making referrals for individuals with attendance in these categories.