

St Albert's Catholic Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2022



Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, race, aptitude, ability and any special need they may have. St Albert's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children can access this. It is a child's right and a parent's legal obligation.

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. In St Albert's we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

St Albert's takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. We will do all we can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance are dealt with in a supportive manner and as quickly as possible.

At St Albert's we acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for their absence. All absences due to a medical reason need to be supported with medical evidence. Medical appointments, where possible, should be arranged to occur outside of school hours.

This policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence including persistent absence
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly and punctually
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Creating an ethos where regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of staff.

Barriers to Attendance

The school recognises the following as the main barriers to good attendance within the community at present

- The after effect of COVID
- Parent's mental health
- Children's mental health
- Parent's lack of support in relation to promoting good attendance on a daily basis
- Increased applications for term time holidays

Legal Obligations

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](#)

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

School Procedures

Arriving in School

1. Gates are opened at 8.45am and closed promptly at 8.55am. Children should be in class for 8.55am (five to Nine St Albert's time). The children are met on the gates by the Learning Mentors and other staff and they go into class independently. Parents do not accompany their child into class.
2. Children are greeted with a warm and friendly meeting at the gate and upon their entrance to class. Every child is encouraged to greet their teacher.
3. Once the teacher and the children are in class, the outside doors are shut and any children arriving in school after this time enter via the main entrance.

4. Children who come in through the main entrance are met by Mrs Jones or the reception staff. If it is after 8.55am the pupil's name is recorded in the late book, along with the time they arrived.
5. All registers are completed by the class teacher or teaching assistant as soon as class begins. Completed registers should be sent to the main office as soon as they are completed.
6. Any child arriving in school between 8.55am-9.15am is put in the late book and the time is recorded in the register. If they arrive between 9.15am-9.30am they receive a late mark and after 9.30 they are given a U. (Classed as being in school but they have missed their mark for that session). The late book is monitored for persistent lateness and either letters are sent home, or the Attendance Lead (Miss Jones) will meet with the parents/carers.
7. Parents are asked to phone school as early as possible but before 9.30am on the first day of absence, if their child is sick. The child's name is noted in the register, with the reason for the absence.
8. If a pupil is absent and their parent/carer has not rung school, a Learning Mentor will call home if it is possible to do so. However, if the absentee is a pupil deemed vulnerable or has poor attendance the Learning Mentor will ring up ASAP.
9. A child who is absent must return to school with a note explaining the absence. If they fail to do this the absence is classed as UNAUTHORISED.

Understanding Absences:

There are two types of absence. Every half day absence from school will be classified by school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

- Authorised (where the school approves the pupil absence when evidence is provided).
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve the absence as no evidence has been provided and the absence requested does not meet the criteria for approval).

Authorised Absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for valid reasons such as :

- An illness
- A medical/dental appointment which unavoidably falls in school time
- A religious observance

Illness - 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.

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 (via the school office). We do, 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.

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. For example:

- Pupils being kept off school for no sufficient reason
- Absences which have not been sufficiently explained
- Day trips/holidays in school time which have not been agreed
- Term time holidays

Whilst any child may be off school due to an illness, sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance can often be sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand and hopefully resolve the problem.

School can also call upon outside agencies for advice and support, for example the School Nurse or the School Attendance Service.

If your child receives 10 unauthorised absences (which equates to 5 school days) then parents will receive a 'Penalty Notice Warning'. If a further absence occurs, within the same term, parents will automatically receive a £60.00 fine. If the fine is not paid within 21 days it automatically increases to £120.00. They have a further 28 days to pay. If the fine is still not paid, this will automatically lead to prosecution for non-payment of the fine.

If your child arrives at school after half past nine, without medical evidence, they will receive a 'U' mark on the register which is also the same as an unauthorised absence.

Leave of Absence Requests/Holidays

We believe that good attendance is vital to the success of the pupil. Term time absence can, and does, seriously disrupt the continuity of learning; not only do children miss the teaching provided on the days they are absent, but are also consequently less prepared for the lessons on and after their return. There is constant risk of underachievement and therefore parents are encouraged not to take holidays during term time.

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

All requests for leave, during term time, must follow regulations and:

- Must be requested because of 'exceptional circumstances', with proof provided.
- Must be made in writing, **a full term before the absence is required** (unless the request is due to illness or death) in order for the request to be approved.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Parents should note that:

- The granting of leave of absence does not set a precedent for similar future requests and the frequency/duration of such leave periods will need to be considered as factors in any decision.
- The Local Authority will use the full range of sanctions where leave of absence is taken without the permission of the school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

Any child with attendance below 90% is considered a persistent absentee and the child will be placed on the PA register. Absence at this level is very serious and is doing considerable damage to the child's education. School needs parent's full support and co-operation to tackle this. If a child is at this stage, the School Attendance Service will take action, if they have not done so already. This will involve liaising with the school and working with the family and child, possibly with intervention from an 'attendance improvement support worker'. An Early Help may instigated.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. 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 headteacher who follows the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. 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.

Parents Procedure for Absence

- If a child is absent, parents should call the school before **9.30am** on the day of the absence stating a reason for the absence.
- A note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence.
- **Only if medical evidence is provided will the absence be authorised.**

School Procedure for absence

- All children receive first day response phone calls from the Attendance Lead. This is a timetabled occurrence which illustrates the high priority we place on minimizing absenteeism.
- Written explanations for absence are collated.
- Patterns in poor attendance are identified, conversations are facilitated by the Attendance Lead with parents/carers, and letters are sent home identifying concerns and inviting parents in to attend attendance panel meetings to enable all concerned to support the child to improve their attendance or to clarify any difficulties. In some cases, the Attendance Lead and/or the School Attendance Service will make home visits.
- The Attendance Lead and the School Attendance Service monitor individual pupils with frequent absence. These children are entered onto the SAS register. The register has 5 stages of concern. Parents are informed of this process and invited to discuss the matter further with either the Learning Mentor or the SAS.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and often do not hear information about the rest of the day from their teacher. Late arriving pupils disrupt the lesson, can cause embarrassment for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

At St Albert's, immediately following morning registration, all classes begin learning. Children who arrive late miss vital learning.

It is the responsibility of the child's **parent/carer** to ensure that children arrive to school at 8.50 am and are in class for 8.55am.

Any children arriving late need to be taken by their parents to the office and children need to be signed into school by a parent.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Our Attendance Lead/Learning Mentor will continue to monitor punctuality through positive communication and support of our families with any issues they may be experiencing which affects their child's punctuality.

Reporting to Parents

Information relating to good attendance is featured in our weekly newsletter. Parents/carers receive school's traffic light scheme at the end of term informing parents of their child's attendance.

Letters are sent home informing parents/carers of concerns relating to attendance and punctuality and invitations to discuss the concerns are offered.

Parents/carers receive attendance reports at all parental review meetings.

Pupils who have poor attendance receive home visits by the Learning Mentor and /or School Attendance Service. During this meeting, targets are set and support is targeted.

Statements of Expectations:

Pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What we expect from our Pupils:

- Be ready – for school, to learn and for lessons. This is one of our 4'Bs (school rules)
- To do all they can to attend school regularly.
- That pupils arrive on time (8.55am) and be appropriately prepared for the school day
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents/Carers:

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Parents may be prosecuted if a child fails to do so. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

What we expect from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually, to meet St Albert's current attendance target.
- To ensure that their child is properly dressed, with the right equipment and ready to learn
- To ensure that they contact school as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend
- To contact the school if any problem should arise that may affect their child's performance in school
- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- Parents are reminded that taking holidays during term time is not allowed and can have a detrimental affect on children's learning.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as during Y6 & Y2 SATs
- To work closely with the school or attendance service to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance

- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

School

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil and meeting their individual pastoral needs. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and cooperation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor punctuality and attendance of pupils for both morning and afternoon sessions.

What Parents/Carers and Pupils can expect from school:

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be a part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by the government
- To do our best to meet our attendance targets.
- To continue to give high priority to attendance & punctuality
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- To further develop effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication between home and school
- To contact parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a good reason
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to school
- Continued recognition and reward for good attendance & punctuality

Role of our Attendance Lead/Learning Mentors

Our Learning Mentor has an outstanding relationship with parents/carers and pupils and this is a powerful vehicle for addressing some of the negativity towards the importance of attendance at Primary school level.

What Parents/Carers and Pupils can expect from our Learning Mentors

- Operates a first day response call for all children.
- Monitors absence notes on a daily and weekly basis.
- Monitors poor attendance records

- Maintains regular verbal and written communication with parents/carers.
- Will carry out home visits for poor attendance.
- Will encourage good attendance and punctuality with good attendance incentives.
- Will encourage good attendance through good attendance charts/incentives and rewards for those who are able to take responsibility for their own attendance.
- Will communicate closely with parents/carers and SAS regarding children who have been absent for a long period of time to ensure a smooth return to school.

The Governing Body

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

St Albert's have a link governor for attendance and their role is to keep up to date with all attendance matters and monitors whole school attendance closely

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

The headteacher 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 headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Headteacher or a member of the SLT will support and promote the Attendance Lead with all matters and ensure that it is high on the school agenda.

The Headteacher will discuss attendance with the Attendance Lead on a weekly basis.

School Strategies and Support

- Making the school environment as welcoming as possible
- Weekly Attendance Assemblies
- Reminding parents weekly of their responsibility in supporting their child's attendance through Monday morning Attendance facts via text message.
- Providing rewards and initiative for pupils with high/most improved levels of attendance.
- Promoting positive staff relations with pupils
- Keeping good records of attendance and making it visible to both staff and students.
- Supporting parents with Early Help offers.
- Sending home termly traffic light cards indicating their child's attendance for that term.
- Parental one page summary of Attendance Policy

Monitoring & Intervention:

Report weekly attendance figures for each class are reported in our newsletter, in the form of our traffic light system. This is also reported on the school website and updated weekly.

Attendance will feature in weekly school assemblies and, if an assembly, is not taking place a short zoom assembly will be organised by the Attendance Lead.

Overall attendance & punctuality is always reported on, usually in the form of celebration, but can also be used as a way of encouraging improvement.

Pupils given a traffic light report card each half term stating their overall attendance figure since September, which will fall into one of three categories:

- Excellent attendance (100%-95%) pupils are in the green;
- Satisfactory attendance, needing improvement (90%-94%) pupils are in the amber;
- Poor attendance, (89% and below) pupils are in the red.

Parents are given their child's attendance at regular pupil reviews throughout the year and attendance figures are printed on pupil reports.

School informs parents/carers each half term by letter if their child's attendance falls below that of the school target.

We will also write to parents/carers if pupils show a pattern of being late for school. Pupils arriving in school after 9.00am will be recorded in the late book. The Learning Mentor will monitor punctuality and children are given Attendance & Punctuality diaries if this needs improving. The Assessment Lead/Learning Mentor will meet with parents/carers if pupils are continually being late for school and, if necessary, the headteacher may also meet with parents.

A key action list is drawn up by the learning mentor on a half termly basis. This list highlights those children who are currently a concern, along with the appropriate actions to be taken. This is either at school level or will involve intervention from the School Attendance Service

If pupil's attendance falls below 85% the School Attendance Service will intervene. However, the attendance service can become involved at school's request in certain circumstances, for example where there are concerns, but attendance is above 85%. This may include a one off home visit or a letter to parents/carers.

New initiatives and ideas for improvement are discussed regularly with the School Attendance Officer.

Class Teachers discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns with parents/carers as and when they deem it necessary.

Celebration & Rewards

Each term, in the celebration assembly, children who have achieved **outstanding attendance** for that term are awarded an attendance medal and a certificate (one days absence permitted).

One term's outstanding attendance=	Bronze medal
Two consecutive terms with outstanding attendance=	Silver medal
Three consecutive terms with outstanding attendance=	Gold medal

Pupils with outstanding attendance receive a special treat. In the past we have been bowling and to the National Wild Flower Centre, given vouchers for WH Smith's, taken children ice skating at Liverpool One and to the Pantomime at St John Bosco at Christmas.

The class with the best class attendance each term are also rewarded with a certificate and each pupil receives a prize.

The large notice board in the school hall is dedicated to attendance news and celebrations and to enable children to monitor their own attendance as a whole class.

The board also displays weekly attendance figures for each class in the form of a traffic light system (Red; Amber; & Green)

Children are awarded throughout the year in good work assembly for improved attendance & punctuality.

Each week, children with 100% attendance and punctuality receive two raffle tickets. One raffle ticket is then placed into the weekly draw and one child will receive a £5 voucher. The second raffle is for a chance to win a £10 voucher at the end of half term. Children potentially have 6/7 chances of winning providing their attendance and punctuality continues to be 100%.

Attendance focus weeks are organised to boost attendance throughout the year.

Class with best attendance each week can have an extra play and the junior class with the best attendance can use the play equipment the following Friday.

School Monitoring

The school sets itself aspirational attendance targets in line with the National Average.

The school monitors attendance figures on a weekly basis and a report is produced so that comparisons can be made with similar periods from the previous year. It also alerts the school if attendance falls below 96%

The school now uses the FFT Aspire Attendance Reporting Tool and also Knowsley reports to make comparisons with other schools.

The headteacher reports termly to Governors on attendance through the Standards Committee, via the Headteacher Report and monitoring of the School Development Plan. A governor is also assigned to be the attendance link and liaises with the school very closely.

Other Agencies and the Graduated Response

The school works closely with other agencies and has an Attendance SLA with the Local Authority. We use the Knowsley Attendance Handbook and Toolkit (see Appendix 1).

The school adheres to the graduated response and staged interventions.

Level 1 refers to the variety of school based interventions to celebrate and promote attendance and secure good attendance levels for all

Level 2 deals with early intervention and a family response to early challenge with children's attendance

Level 3 uses targeted intervention and brokering multi-agency support

Level 4 moves on to a statutory intervention through the local authority

The school makes use of the LA Vulnerable Panel and will escalate identified cases to Social Service for Educational Neglect if all else has failed and the child/family meets the requirement.

Educational Neglect

The school follows Knowsley MBC Educational Neglect Policy (Appendix 1). Educational neglect is considered as a last resort and is at Level 4 but the school recognises the significant and detrimental effect that continuous and prolonged missed education can have upon children and how it effect their progress, mental health and future prospects. Full time education is the right of every child and the legal responsibility of the parent/carer.

Signed

Chair of Governors.....

Mrs A Tambourini Gunning

Date.....