



Our Lady of Good Help

Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy 2023

Chair of Governors	Mrs S. Devereux
Headteacher	Mr M. McQuiston
Date adopted: September 2023	Review Date: September 2024

'Like Our Lady, we live wisely, think deeply and love generously in Christ.'

At Our Lady of Good Help, we consider excellent attendance at school to be of the utmost importance. We recognise the clear link between attendance at school and attainment; poor or irregular attendance undermines teaching and learning, and has adverse effects on a child's educational attainment and their emotional wellbeing.

We understand that attendance at school promotes the welfare of all pupils and that poor attendance can be a key indicator for identifying safeguarding concerns.

Our Lady of Good Help Catholic Primary School takes a proactive approach to encouraging good attendance because we know the impact it can have for the whole community. Our rewards-based approach to good attendance encourages good habits and aims to establish routines in children so that they make a positive contribution to our society in their adult lives.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly. At OLGH, we define regular attendance as no less than 97% and we aim for all pupils to attend school every day, on time. Parents must ensure children wear the correct uniform and are prepared for the day's learning. We provide support to families, when necessary, to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.

Our Pledge

- To maximise the attendance of all children;
- To minimise persistent absenteeism;
- To encourage a positive and proactive ethos within the school by which attendance is prioritised and promoted;
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern
- To work in partnership with parents and carers, the local authority, Children's Services, Health and other partners to improve attendance;
- To analyse attendance rigorously to inform future practice and policy, highlighting key groups needing support;
- To report periodically to the Board of Governors about trends and actions taken;
- To work closely with our Education Welfare Officer to hold parents to account and ultimately improve attendance;
- To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the school community are actively communicated and the attendance policy is understood.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Authority designates an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to work with the school. The attendance team – Miss Harris, Mrs. Foster, Mrs Olushonde and Mr. McQuiston - reviews the attendance data weekly to identify pupils who are a cause for concern (those with attendance below 97%) and strategise. The EWO, Designated Attendance Lead and Head Teacher discuss concerns regularly, coordinating an action plan for improvement and evaluate the impact of actions previously taken. Parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. They will be made aware that the Local Authority has the power to prosecute them for failing to ensure that their children attend school.

Class teachers complete the school registers twice daily – first thing in the morning and after lunch. They will liaise with the school Attendance & Admin Officer, Miss Harris, regarding issues of concern around poor

attendance and punctuality patterns. Parents will be informed when necessary, and may be invited into the school to discuss ways to improve their child's attendance.

Governors are kept up to date half-termly with attendance trends and the actions taken to improve attendance. Attendance data is analysed and presented to School Governors in an easy to understand manner to enable them to challenge effectively. They are made aware of any EWO involvement.

Rewards	
Children attending school earn tokens for their class. The following system is used:	
All children present	20 tokens awarded
1 child absent	15 tokens awarded
2 children absent	10 tokens awarded
3 children absent	5 tokens awarded
More than 3 children absent	0 tokens awarded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of each week, the tokens awarded are counted and the class with the most receives the attendance trophy to take back to their class for the week. They also receive an additional play time. At the end of each half-term, the total tokens awarded during the half-term are counted and the winning class receives a fun afternoon of games as a reward. The class with the best attendance in an academic year will receive a class prize. Daily individual attendance points are added to the house system via Class Dojo. Children who have good attendance, 97%+, will receive individual termly & yearly certificates. Special 100% attendance certificates are given to those children who haven't missed a day of school in an academic year. Children receive special recognition if they have never missed a day of school in their whole time at OLGH. 	

Punctuality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School starts at 8:45AM. Our school gates open at 8:45AM and close at 8:55AM. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked late. If a child arrives after 8:55AM, they should be taken to the school office through the pedestrian gate by the person bringing them to school so that their attendance can be recorded and to ensure they enter the school building safely. The attendance officer will keep a late register and transfer the information to the official SIMs register. Pupils arriving after 9:30AM will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given and evidence shown, e.g. A doctor's appointment. Punctuality data is kept and analysed to inform future actions.

In the Event of Any Absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a child is to be absent, parents are asked to inform the school via our PA Connect parentapp reporting function or by ringing the school office before school. Parents must inform school each day of absence unless it has been predetermined that they will be absent for a period of time, e.g. vomiting = 48 hours off school. A child's absence from school is considered a safeguarding concern and for this reason we require evidence as to why a child has been absent. <i>If a parent fails to contact school regarding their child's absence and school is unable to contact a parent or emergency contact by the second day, school staff will attempt to visit the home address.</i> <i>If this continues into the third day of absence, a referral will be made to the EWO, for an attendance welfare home visit to be carried out.</i>

First Day Response

- If the pupil is absent without explanation when the register is returned by the class teacher to the Attendance Officer, the Attendance Officer will send a text to the parent.
- If there is no response, the Attendance Officer will ring the parent(s) of the absent child before 10AM.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to respond to the Attendance Officer and provide a reason for the absence.
- If no satisfactory reason is given, the child's absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised and/or there are any safeguarding concerns, a member of school staff may conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- Social workers are informed of any absence.

Authorised/ Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence:

This is an absence with permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absences for when a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness).

Medical evidence can be a doctor's note, a dated appointment card, a dated compliment slip from the chemist, a medical letter or note, a prescription or medication or a confirmation text.

Unauthorised absence:

This is an absence without permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Failure to contact school to inform the Attendance Officer of the reason for absence by Day 3 will result in a referral being made to education welfare (EWO).

Medical or Dental Appointments

Please provide an appointment card or letter as proof of all appointments of this nature. We are unable to authorise any medical appointments without this information. Wherever possible, we would encourage these appointments to take place out of school time to avoid disrupting your child's education.

Holidays

Since 1st September 2013, **the law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any application for leave must only be in **exceptional** circumstances. In order to approve this, the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are **exceptional** and warrant the granting of leave. **Headteachers are expected to not class any term time holiday as exceptional.** Parents can receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Since September 2013, these notices cost £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Managing 'exceptional circumstances'

The Department for Education cites three examples of 'exceptional circumstances':

- A parent is a member of the armed forces and has restricted leave (a letter from your HR department will be required);
- A parent is a member of the Fire Service and has restricted shift patterns/ leave (a letter from your HR department will be required);
- There has been a bereavement of a close family member.

Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is defined as any child whose attendance is below 90% at any given time.

School will treat PA as a safeguarding issue.

School Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Stage 1

The Attendance Officer will monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils. Early identification and support will be a priority. Supportive conversations will be held in the first instance with Mrs. Foster to discuss our concerns and gain understanding of the reasons for absence.

Stage 2

If a child misses school and attendance becomes a concern (eg. unauthorised absences), the Attendance Officer will send a school warn & inform letter to the parents/carers. The letter will contain information about the child's current attendance, further monitoring and the procedure to be followed if there is still no improvement in attendance.

Stage 3

If there is no improvement or a deterioration in attendance, and attendance is still a concern, the Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting in school between the parents/ carers, Miss Harris and Mrs. Foster (DAL). Further monitoring will take place.

Stage 4

If there is still no improvement, the parent will be called to a meeting in school with the Head Teacher and the Attendance Officer. Additional support for families will be explored.

Stage 5

If no improvement, a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will explain their formal procedures and may arrange a home visit or appointment to discuss appropriate support.

Stage 6

Parents of pupils whose attendance is categorised as Persistent Attendance (below 90%) and whose attendance has not improved following intervention may be subject to prosecution in court.

This may be an application for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or referral to the courts for prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996. There are a number of options available to the Magistrates, including a fine; and in more serious cases, community sentences or imprisonment.

School Punctuality Monitoring Procedures

Stage 1

Punctuality is closely monitored by the Attendance Officer and discussed at the attendance team meetings. If a child is regularly late, parents will be invited to a supportive meeting with Mrs. Foster (DAL) to discuss the reasons and help parents understand how this can affect the children.

Stage 2

If a child's punctuality becomes a concern, parents will receive a school warn and inform letter from the Attendance Officer. Further monitoring will take place.

Stage 3

If there is no improvement or a deterioration in punctuality, parents will be called to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss support strategies.

Stage 4

If unauthorised lateness persists and it is significantly affecting their learning, school will refer these families to Education Welfare.