

 <div style="text-align: center;"> St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy Attendance Policy </div>	Issue number 1
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As a Catholic School we seek to work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure the best possible start for each child entrusted into our care. Regular attendance and punctuality are an essential part of this partnership.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Raise pupil achievement through promoting attendance and punctuality levels of 98% and above.
- Assist parents, carers and pupils through clear procedures and expectations for staff, parents and pupils regarding attendance.
- To safeguard vulnerable children through clear measures for dealing with absence and lateness.

Arrival Time

The school gates open at 8.45am. Please do not drop children before this time as the playground is unsupervised. Children should arrive no later than 8.55am. The gates will be locked from 8.55am onwards.

Notification of Lateness or Absence

Parents should phone/inform **the office** before 8.55am on the same day if the child is going to be late or absent. The reason for absence must be as specific as possible – e.g. eye infection rather than sick or unwell. Please leave an answer phone message if unable to speak directly with a staff member. All periods of absence should be followed up with a note/letter on the child's return to school.

Children arriving after 8.55am should come to the School Office with an adult so that their attendance and reason for lateness may be recorded.

Registration Procedures

1. Registers will be taken twice daily, once for the morning session and once for the afternoon session.
2. Morning registers will be completed between 8:55am and 9.15am; afternoon registers will be completed at 1.05pm and 1.15pm.
3. Teachers/Teaching Assistants will mark pupils 'present' with a /or 'absent' with an N.
4. All 'N's will be checked against absence messages and late arrivals. First day absences who have not left a message will then be given a follow up call by 9.30am.
5. Arrivals after 8:55am are marked 'L' (late)
6. Arrivals after 9:15am are marked 'U' (late, after register has closed)
7. Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:
 - Registers provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils.

- They are legal documents that may be required in a court of law.
- We have a duty to safeguard our pupils and non-attendance / poor attendance would give us cause for concern and investigation.

For this reason, all registers are checked by the School Business Officer/ Attendance Officer for accuracy and timely completion shortly after registration closes.

Authorised Absence or Lateness

Only the school can authorise an absence.

1. Where the school is satisfied with the parent's explanation for the absence and there have been no previous issues with the child's absence or punctuality record the school will authorise the absence.
2. As long as children are collected and returned in the same day, Doctor/Dentist appointments they are not counted as absences. Please try and arrange appointments outside school hours where possible. The situation is the same for a child who leaves after registration for a good reason such as illness, visits to secondary schools etc.
3. Children should not be kept off for the whole day for medical appointments unless they are too unwell to attend, in which case the parent must contact the school confirming the reason for their absence and it will be counted as an absence. Routine medical appointments such as dental and eye sight checks should be made out of term time.
4. The exceptional circumstances code will be considered for issues such as death in the family, moving house etc. Parents should contact the school in advance, wherever possible, about such requests for absence.

The admin staff will keep a record of the reasons given for all late arrivals and absences and these will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer/Head of School on a weekly basis. Other agencies, such as the Early Help Advisor will be involved where lateness or absence is causing a concern.

Unauthorised Absence

The School Business Officer/ Attendance Officer will contact the parents to express concern and advise the Head of School accordingly when:

- No satisfactory explanation has been given to explain the lateness or absence.
- There is reason to doubt the accuracy of the reasons given for the lateness or absence.

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the home will be recorded. In the case of families deemed to be 'vulnerable', a home visit will take place on day one of absence. For all other families, should contact be unsuccessful, a home visit will take place on day two of absence.

Absence Escalation Procedure

Attendance and Lateness is tracked on a weekly basis, from the end of Autumn Term 1, by the Attendance Officer and monitored by the Head of School. If a child has attendance below 90% they will automatically fall into our Stage 2 category and be monitored accordingly.

<u>Absence Escalation Procedure</u>	
Initial Absence	First day calling – Phone call if no contact has been made with school. Home visits if no contact is able to be made.
Stage 1	95% and below – Stage 1 concern letter to monitor attendance to be sent (monitor attendance for 6 weeks)
Stage 2	90% and below – Stage 2 concern letter to be sent to all. Medical proof required (if possible) for all future absences (prescribed medicines, prescriptions, doctors' notes, appointment confirmation cards or texts and hospital letters). If not received, the absence may be unauthorised.
	Referral to Senior Staff at sustained > 90% - school meeting/discussion arranged and completion of Parent Agreement at staff discretion.
Stage 3	Further decline or 8 unauthorised sessions in a four week school period will result in referral to the Local Authority.
Stage 4	Local Authority referral. Further decline may result in court action.

<u>Late Escalation Procedure</u>	
Stage 1	90% and below – Initial concern letter to monitor punctuality to be sent (monitor punctuality for 6 weeks)
Stage 2	Continued 90% and below – Second concern letter to be sent to all (monitor punctuality for 4 weeks)
Stage 3	Further monitoring for 2 weeks. Referral to Senior Staff at continued 90% or below - school meeting is needed – completion of Parent Agreement at 90%.
Stage 4	Further decline or continued 90% or below punctuality record may result in referral to the Local Authority.

Safeguarding

At St Elizabeth's we believe in supporting the whole family; our first duty of care, however, is to the child; where there is any doubt regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child, we will report it immediately to Social Services. Our preferred option is an open and honest relationship with our parents or carers; if there are genuine problems please talk to us.

Leave of Absence, During Term Time

We have adopted a zero tolerance with regards to holidays during term time; this is in line with the Local Authority and Government guidelines.

Government Legislation from September 1st 2013 states schools can only grant requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. No holidays during term time will be authorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances such as an immediate family members' bereavement. No other reasons – for example parents' shift working patterns, or parents' illness coupled with inability to take holidays, count as exceptional circumstances.

Parents who take their children out of school during term time and the absence has not been authorised, may be issued with a Penalty Notice. We expect 100% attendance and punctuality except for very good reasons.

Amendments to the 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying penalty notices after they have been issued by Derbyshire County Council. From 1st September 2013, parents must pay £120 per child and per parent within 28 days. However, if payment is made within 21 days, the fine will be reduced to £60 per child and per parent. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Absence, lateness and term time holidays will be recorded in the End of Year individual school report.

The School's focus will be to actively encourage punctuality and good attendance, through rewards such as house points/class attendance award. End of term certificates will be issued and end of year prizes for 100% attendance.

Covid 19 Amendments (11.09.20)

Arrival time

Children should arrive promptly at their class designated arrival time through their designed entrance (communicated via separate letter) School gates will be locked at 9.30am

Notification of Lateness or absence

Children arriving after their class start time should report via the school office. If arriving within 20 minutes of designated time this will be recorded as 'L' (Late). After 20 minutes this will be recorded as 'U' (late after register has closed).

Registration procedures

Children absent due to covid symptoms or isolating will be recorded as 'X'

Children absent due to concern of parents will be recorded as 'O' (unauthorised absence).

Absence escalation procedures

Percentages for escalation will remain the same. Attendance recordings of 'X' will not be included when calculating attendance percentages.