

St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Compassion, challenge and excellence: bringing children to Christ through education.

Attendance Policy



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Approved by:	Full Governing Body
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1. Aim

The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways the school, parents and children can work together to continue to ensure every child is in school as much as they possibly can be, so that they benefit from all that our school can offer. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility.

This policy is informed by:

"Working together to improve school attendance" DfE Guidance, May 2022

The UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child reminds us all that:

Article 28: (Right to education): "All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free... The Convention places a high value on education."

2. Catholic Context

As a Catholic school, the Gospel Values should be at the heart of any Catholic education, emphasising Christ at the foundation of all that we do as a school:

Justice- action against oppression

"Because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice." (The Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge, Luke 18:5)

3. The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

4. School Day

The school gates open at 8:30am each day when the children are welcomed by school staff. The school day begins at 8:50am when the class teacher will take the school register. After lunchtime the children are again registered at 1:00pm. The school day has a staggered end, with Reception ending at 3:10pm, Years 1 to 6 at 3:20pm.

5. Punctuality

The school gates are open from 8:30 to 8:50am, at which point they are locked. Children arriving after this point will be recorded as late. If children arrive more than 30 minutes after the register is taken (9:20am) this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless the school has received prior notification of the late arrival.

6. Parents

There is a link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Parents have a crucial role to play in helping our children to succeed. Parents should ensure that our children:

- Turn up
- Be on time
- Be prepared

The school will listen, understand, empathise and support parents, but will not tolerate unacceptable levels of attendance.

7. Absences

Parents should report absences on the first day of absence to the school office by telephone message, email or by using the pupil absence report google form on the school website. The school will always seek an explanation for absence so that it can accurately understand why a child has missed some of their education.

8. Requests for Authorised Absence

Parents are the first educators of our children. Schools have a statutory responsibility to ensure that every child receives the education the state makes available for them. Parents should make requests for authorised absences as far ahead as is possible to the school office by letter or email. The Head of School will consider such requests taking into consideration our child's historic attendance pattern, reasons for the request and other factors deemed relevant before deciding whether to authorise the request. The decision and reasons will be communicated to the parent in writing within five working days.

9. Monitoring

The school office will track the attendance of all individual children so that no child is missed. When a child is absent and the school office is unaware of the reason both parents will be contacted on the first day of absence.

If a child is absent for two days without a known reason for absence this will be reported by the school office to the Head of School and the school office will make efforts to contact both parents by telephone and email.

If a child is absent for three days without a known reason for absence this will be reported by the school office to the Head of School. The Head of School or representative will take steps to ascertain why the child is absent; further phone calls to the parent or other known family members or friends, home visits, or other steps deemed necessary.

Where it is not possible to establish the reason for a pupil's absence and/or to make contact with the pupil's parent or carer the school will contact the police immediately in case there are potential serious welfare concerns. This practice responds to the coroner's report in the Chadrack Mulo case in 2016.

Every third week of each half term the school office will prepare for the Head of School individual pupil class lists arranged:

- Rate of attendance
- Number of lates

The Head of School will review this data and work with other staff to support children and families where attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.

10. Education Welfare Officer

The school benefits from the support of the local authority's EWO. This officer meets with the school office and the Head of School every half-term to view the school's attendance records and discuss cases. Where our children's attendance rate or pattern of absence gives cause for concern the Head of School and EWO will agree how the Educational Welfare Service will work together with individual families to rapidly improve children's attendance.

11. Definitions

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| ● Excellent | 98.0% - 100.0% |
| ● Good | 96.0% - 97.9% |
| ● Beginning to cause concern | 93.0% - 95.9% |
| ● More significant concern | 90.0% - 92.9% |
| ● Unacceptable | Below 89.9% |
| ● Severe | Below 50.0% |

12. Recognition

Every day senior staff welcome the children arriving at school from 8:30 to 8:50am. This welcome provides opportunities to both demonstrate the positive culture and ethos everyone shares to high attendance and to identify children who might need additional recognition or support to make the start to their day a successful one.

Once a year children with high attendance rates will receive a school certificate to mark their achievement across the academic year. Children with an average attendance of:

- 100% will receive a gold certificate
- 99% will receive a silver certificate
- 98% will receive a bronze certificate.

13. Penalty Notice Fines

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 enable local authorities, senior staff in schools and police officers to issue penalty notices to the parents of children whose level of attendance at school is unacceptable. The school may request the local authority's support in the issuing of a Penalty Notice Fee in exceptional circumstances, for example 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period. The school will refer to the *Bexley Council Code of Conduct in Respect of Penalty Notices in School Attendance Cases* prior to making such a decision.

14. Governance

The Curriculum Committee receives a termly report from the Head Teacher that provides the following information under the following categories in order to allow for meaningful comparisons:


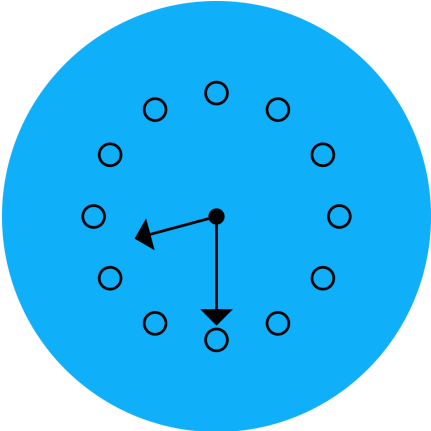

	Primary Attendance			
Attendance Rate	<85%	85-90%	90-95%	95-100%
Number of Pupils				

Attendance	
Overall	
Nursery	
Reception	
Year 1	
Year 2	
Year 3	
Year 4	
Year 5	
Year 6	
Female	
Male	
SEN	

EAL	
FSM	
LAC	

These reports are drawn from the school's management information system.

Appendix 1 Key Attendance Agreements

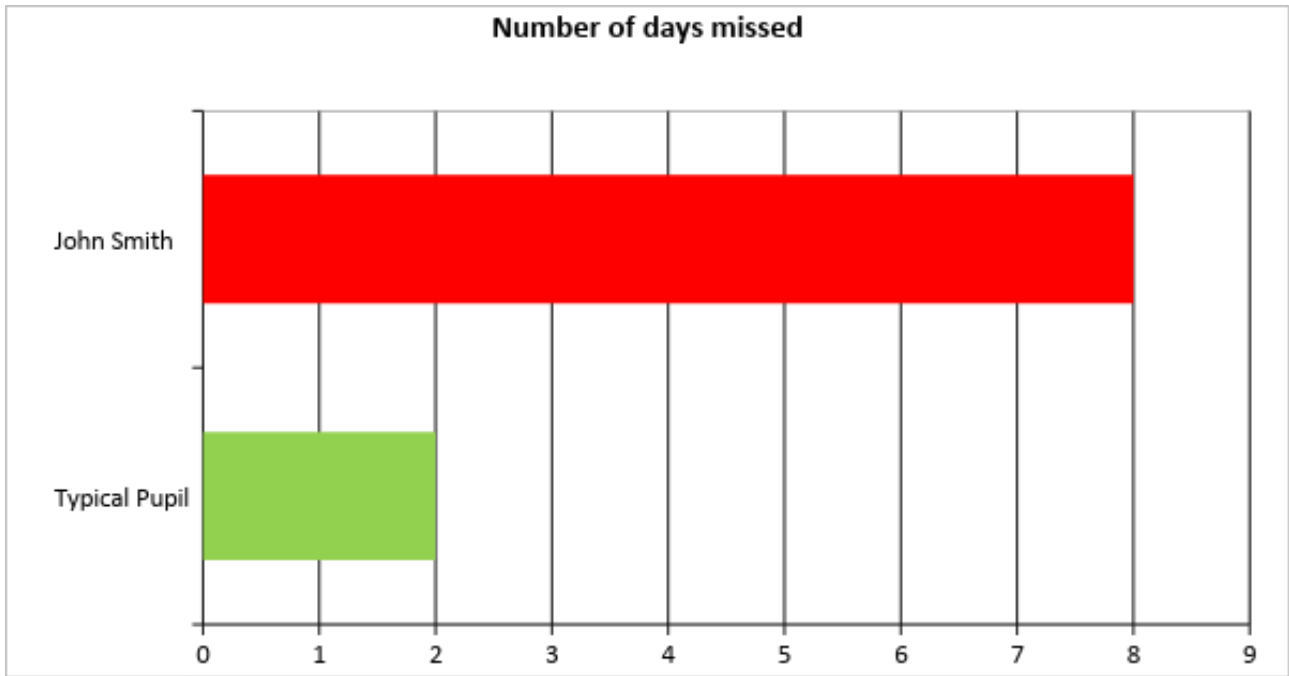
	<p>We turn up.</p>
	<p>We are on time.</p>
	<p>We are prepared.</p>

Appendix 2 Letter Template

Date

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith,

John has missed more school than his classmates. He has been absent 8 days so far this school year.



Students fall behind when they miss school- whether students are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on John’s absences this term and I appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Quirke
Head of School