



St Agatha's Catholic Primary School

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Attendance Policy

Name of Policy Author: Mrs Elizabeth Cahill

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Date of Review: November 2024

Review Requirements: Every 2 Years

Statutory Policy?

To be Completed for Policies that Governors Need to Sign off

Governor Committee:

Signature:



MISSION STATEMENT

The life of St Agatha's School is centred on our Catholic faith, in which we proclaim the Gospel values such as love, peace and justice which influence all our activities and relationships.

We value and encourage the uniqueness of each child and recognise that everyone has a positive contribution to make to the life of the school community.

We value worshipping and celebrating together, sharing our Christian witness and building upon the foundations already established at home where parents are the first educators of their children.

We aim to;

- encourage the spiritual development and prayer life of each child and help them to develop their relationship with God
- offer a place where differences and problems are talked through and prayed through together and where success is shared and celebrated
- provide a secure and happy environment where quality teaching and learning can take place
- deliver a curriculum that meets the intellectual, physical and creative needs of each child as well as delivering spiritual, emotional and pastoral care
- foster respect for, and recognise the rights of, others regardless of gender, race or ability and to offer equal opportunities to all
- value the contribution of home, school, parish, community and diocese in our daily lives

*WHAT WE ARE IS GOD'S GIFT TO US WHAT WE BECOME IS OUR
GIFT TO GOD*

Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children whatever their age. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education [Pupil Registration] Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which children are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. This information is collated electronically and is checked by the nominated Education Welfare Officer [EWO] of the school.

2 Definitions

2.1 *Authorised absence*

- An absence is classified as 'authorised' when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian using the correct form available from the school website or school office.
- If a child has been unwell and the school has received information to explain the absence and provides a note on return indicating the length of absence and the reason for it.
- Only the school can make an absence 'authorised'. Parents / guardian do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / guardians will be classified as 'authorised'. For example, if a parent takes their child out of school to go shopping, on holiday during school hours or keeps their child off school in order to prepare for competitive exams, this will not mean it is an 'authorised' absence.

2.2 *Unauthorised absence*

- An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is 'unauthorised' if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a Child is Absent

- 3.1 The school keeps a record of all child absences reported by phone message.
- 3.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will also record the absence on the electronic register.
- 3.3 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence if not already communicated.
- 3.4 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.5 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. A Child Missing from Education (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for definition of CME) could be an indicator of a Safeguarding concern. In this instance the school will follow its CME procedures.

4 Requests for Leave of Absence

- 4.1 We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and guardians to contact the school at least a week in advance. As each request for absence is unique, any such request will be considered on its own merits, and many factors will be taken into consideration.
- 4.2 Parents / guardians can make written requests, to the headteacher, if they wish to withdraw their child/children from school for a holiday during term time. Requests will be considered if: (i)

the application is made to the headteacher in advance, by a parent/ guardian that the child normally lives with and (ii) there are exceptional circumstances. If not approved by the school, and the absence goes ahead, this will be classed as 'unauthorised'. (Form found on school's website.)

5 Long-term Absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for a long period of time, the school will send material home, so that children can keep up with their learning. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated Unauthorised Absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent / guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents / guardians may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem or may receive a letter from the school. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the EWO who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents / guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by EWO service, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for Good Attendance

- 7.1 All pupils who have achieved excellent attendance throughout the school year will have this celebrated in their end of school report. Excellent attendance is defined as a child achieving an attendance percentage equal to, or above, the school's target. This figure will be shared in a school's newsletter at the beginning of each academic year.

8 Attendance Targets

- 8.1 The school's annual attendance targets are agreed between the headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer. The targets are challenging, yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. These are shared with the school community.

9 Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they receive termly updates on attendance from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for reporting any concerns to the headteacher.
- 9.4 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.