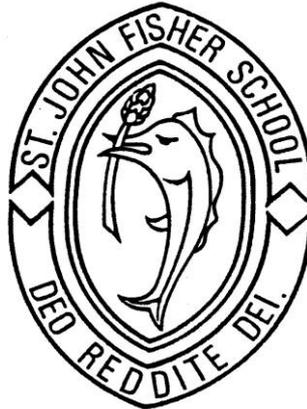


# St JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### The Mission statement:

**“St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School educates pupils spiritually and academically forming them through Faith so that they will achieve their aspirations and contribute to their community.”**

Date of Review:	September 2020
Next Review:	September 2022
Date of Ratification:	September 28 <sup>th</sup> 2020

Policy owner:

T Chapman

## **Attendance at School**

St John Fisher School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education. Through good attendance at school pupils will be able to maximise their opportunities and be helped to realise their scholastic potential. A high attendance rate in lessons helps pupils prepare for and achieve in examinations. Attainment at school is hampered by time away from class. The Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies will work closely with the school in order to promote regular attendance and high standards of punctuality.

## **Underlying Principles**

The Attendance Policy contributes to the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda. That is:

1. To enjoy and achieve
2. To stay safe
3. To be healthy
4. To participate positively
5. To become economically independent

All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. The register is called twice daily and pupils are expected to be present for the 380 sessions, or half-days. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs.

Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. St John Fisher School supports the government and LA target of a minimum of 96% attendance for all pupils. Many of our pupils achieve 100% attendance over one, two or three terms. Some pupils achieve 100% attendance over more than one year. Pupils, parents and staff are rightly proud of such remarkable achievement.

The law of the UK is quite clear about absence from school. In the school register schools **must** differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be out of school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**. (Ref. DFES 0628-2003)

Parents may not authorise any absence, only the Head Teacher can do this.

Parentally condoned unauthorised absence can be a problem as it means disruption to a child's education. School staff need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence whether written, telephoned or given in person and where parentally-condoned absence appears to be a problem the Attendance Advisory Practitioner Service will be involved at an early stage and, in certain circumstances, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

## **Student Attendance Policy**

### **Holidays**

As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and national guidelines, St John Fisher School will not authorise holidays during term time.

Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance. A request for such absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher

When requesting leave of absence during term time may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions missed schooling which is equivalent to 5.2% of absence.

### **Notes:**

- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 has made it possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. These penalty notices will require the recipient to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days. A penalty notice will be issued to each parent/ carer that resides with the child. Nonpayment of these fines will result in application to Criminal Court.
- If a Parent/Carer requests for a term holiday is refused, but the holiday taken, it will be classified as unauthorised absence and subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/ carer that resides with the child by Medway's Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA)
- A formal application must be made in writing, IN ADVANCE and returned to the student services office.
- Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.

- If the parent/ carer removes a student from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday without advising the school this will be referred to the Attendance Advisor. On the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/ carer contact the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assumed to be a holiday absence and penalty notice(s) will be issued.

### **Illness, medical and dental appointments.**

As far as possible medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. Medical appointments can count as authorised absence but the Pastoral Care Leader (PCL) will need to see proof of their appointment. Hospital Consultant appointments will be classed as authorised absence; however proof of appointment must be shown to the Pastoral Care Leader (PCL). If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, medical evidence may be requested. This may be in the form of doctor's note, sight of prescription or sight of prescribed medication etc. All medical evidence will be passed to the attendance officer who will then update records with the correct register codes.

### **Not attending in circumstances relating to Corona Virus**

In line with government guidance, students will be coded as X, not attending in circumstances relating to corona virus, in the following circumstances:

- If they are experiencing symptoms of corona virus. In this instance they will be coded as X until the result of their test is returned. If the result is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and will be coded X for the duration. If the test is negative the child should return to school and will be coded X for the days of absence whilst awaiting the test result. If the child remains unwell with sickness other than corona virus, then the relevant, standard absence code will be applied.
- If a member of their household is displaying symptoms. All members of the household should then self-isolate whilst that person is tested. If the test is positive, the rest of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of symptoms. The student will be coded X for the duration. If the person displaying the symptoms returns a negative test, then the student should return to school and the X code will be applied for the days of absence whilst awaiting the test results.
- If they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for corona virus. In this instance they should self-isolate for 14 days after the last contact with that person. They will be coded X for the duration.
- If they are required to quarantine for 14 days after arrival in or return to the UK from any country not currently on the Government produced exemption list. The student will be coded X for the duration.

- If the student or a family member receives a letter from the authorities stating that they are required to shield due to rising infection rates in the area. The student will be coded X for the duration of their absence. The school will contact parents of students who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X will not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

In all cases of self-isolation, we will ask parents to inform us immediately about the outcome of a test. We will not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation

### **Local lockdown**

If rates of the disease rise locally, we may need to prevent some pupils from attending. In this instance we will follow National and Local government guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of a local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - will be used for those students who are asked not to attend.

### **Remote education**

If a student is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), they will be offered access to remote education. We will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity.

### **Days of religious observance**

This is absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should give advance notice.

**Interviews** with prospective employers, Further Education (FE) or for a place at another school. The school will ask for advance notice and proof of appointment such as a letter or invitation.

### **Study Leave**

Study leave is granted sparingly and is for year 11 students only. This leave of absence may vary from year to year depending on school arrangements. Study leave when granted will be notified to parents/carers and students in advance and will be close to or during the external examination period.

### **Exclusions**

A student excluded for a fixed term remains on roll and the absence is authorised. Permanent exclusions from St John Fisher School are rare but during the period of appeal or review, the absence is authorised. A student's name may be removed from the roll on the first school day after the day on which:

1. The independent appeal panel upholds the permanent exclusion
2. The independent appeal panel does not uphold the permanent exclusion, but does not direct the student to be reinstated
3. The prescribed period for lodging an appeal has expired and the parent/carer has not lodged an appeal
4. The parent has, before the expiry of the prescribed period, advised the LA in writing that he/she does not intend to appeal

## **Lateness to school**

All students are asked to arrive punctually to school. Punctuality is a legal requirement, enshrined in law.

## **Morning**

Students must arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. and be on the playground for line up by 8.35 a.m. Any student arriving after this will be recorded as late. Students who arrive after 8.35 a.m. will need to report to and sign in at the AEN centre on upper site and the hub on lower site.

Students arriving after 9.00am will receive an unauthorized mark for the morning session.

## **Afternoon**

After lunch students will register in their P5 classrooms at 2.00 p.m., apart from Wednesdays when they register at 12.00.

Punctuality is monitored. Students arriving after registration close will have an unauthorized mark for the morning session. Form tutors will detain students who are regularly late. PCLs will monitor after registration lateness and sanctions will be imposed.

Where a student has 3 late marks after close of registration, a letter will be sent by the School advising of their concerns and request medical evidence for each absence. Further lates after close of registration will be referred to the Attendance Advisor and this may result in a penalty notice being issued. This is £120 per parent/carer if paid within 28 days, £60 if paid within 21 days. Unpaid penalty notices are referred to Medway Magistrate Court.

## **Rewards and Incentives**

Certificates will be awarded to those who have 100% attendance at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6. This will be presented during celebration assemblies held by the Head of Year.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Advisor works closely with the Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding and Attendance and the Attendance Officer who has responsibility for attendance. Attendance panels, to which parents and students are invited, may be held to deal with problems concerning attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the policy is made available to all staff appointees and to parents/carers who request to read it. The Headteacher must ensure the policy is regularly reviewed and where necessary revised.

### **Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding and Attendance**

- Referrals to the Attendance Advisor
- Regular liaising with the Attendance Advisor and the Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding and Attendance.
- Policy ratification and review

### **Attendance Officer and Pastoral Care Leaders**

- Raising awareness with parents/ carers regarding attendance concerns, including truancy. External truancy will be addressed by the attendance officer and referred to the Attendance Advisor if necessary. Internal truancy will be addressed by the year teams.
- Liaising with school nurse regarding students with medical needs
- Liaising with any students with rising attendance concerns
- Providing data regarding attendance to the DCSF three times a year
- Contacting parents/carers of students on the first day of absence
- Communicating with parents/carers in the event of unauthorised absence
- Keeping data updated on a daily basis
- Liaising with the Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding and Attendance.

## **Staff**

- Keeping an accurate register in line with procedure for SIMs registration
- Celebrating good attendance with students/form
- Take appropriate action to counteract lateness to form/classes

## **Students**

- To ensure that they attend school every day unless they are genuinely unwell and unfit to come to school, being mindful of the government minimum required attendance of 96%.
- To arrive to school on time every day.

## **Parents**

- To enforce their child's attendance at school, being mindful of the government minimum required attendance of 96%.
- To ensure that their child arrives to school on time.
- To inform the school of any absence for their child using the published numbers and supply any evidence required to support this absence as and when requested.

## **Children Missing in Education**

Parents have the right to home-educate their children. Medway Council monitors elective home education through a dedicated post within the Inclusion Team. The Inclusion Team manager oversees notification of children educated at home, or parents who are considering removing their child from school to educate at home. There is a clear process in place to track the progress of elective home education and it is undertaken jointly through multi disciplinary co-operation.

- Parents inform the school that they intend to remove their child from school roll to 'educate otherwise';
- Notification is made to the Attendance Advisor by the school to inform them of the intention and this must be in writing from parent/carers;
- Information of cases known to Attendance Advisor where a decision has been made to 'educate otherwise' will be shared with the Inclusion Team;
- Further information is gathered by the Inclusion Team to inform of the next action. If appropriate, contact is made with parents to offer mediation and possible support in school/academy;
- Contact is made by the Home Education Advisor to meet and offer advice and guidance on the education being provided. This is usually at the home address but other alternative venues can be offered;
- If there are concerns regarding the education provided and it is deemed inadequate, parents/carers will be advised to register their child/children at a school/academy. If this

does not happen a report (must be submitted) to the Attendance Advisor for the purpose of pursuing a School Attendance Order, if appropriate.

St John Fisher School will refer an elected home-education pupil to the local authority via Medway's referral form. On receipt of a referral the information will be logged onto the database, which will trigger immediate action.

**If a child has left St John Fisher School with no forwarding school or academy:**

- The attendance officer will make a referral to the Attendance Advisor with as much information about the child as is known by the school;
- The Attendance Advisor makes enquiries, including a home visit.
- Council tax/benefit systems checked;
- Enquiries made of partners and other agencies including Children's Social Care and partner agencies with responsibility for housing to establish any additional risks to young person;
- The Attendance Advisor will check that the school have uploaded information to CTF, Common Transfer File, lost pupil database, school2school website
- Students will only be off rolled after consultation and agreement from the Attendance Advisor.