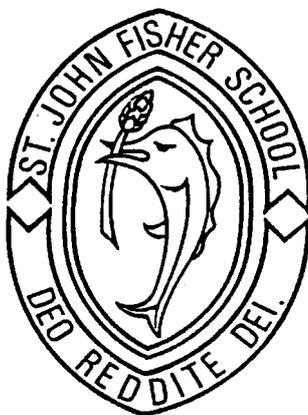


St JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Mission statement:

“St John Fisher School seeks to help and encourage pupils to develop individually, collectively and freely a way of life modelled on Christ, in accordance with the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church.”

Date of Review: November 12th 2018

Next Review: November 12th 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 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 do 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 Head teacher

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. Non-payment 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 advisory practitioner (AAP). 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.

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. School should 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 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.

Afternoon

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

Both attendance and punctuality will be monitored. Concerns will be referred to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP). Form tutors will detain students who are regularly late. PCLs will monitor after registration lateness and sanctions will be imposed. Continued concern will result in AAP referral.

Rewards and Incentives

Certificates will be awarded to those who have 100% attendance for each term. This will be presented during celebration assemblies held by the Head of Year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pastoral Care Leaders

The AAP works closely with the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour, 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 Behaviour, Safeguarding and Attendance

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

Attendance Officer and Pastoral Care Leaders

- Raising awareness with parents regarding attendance concerns
- 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 Behaviour, 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.