

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School



"Seeking Growth Together"

Attendance Policy

St. John Vianney Attendance Policy

At St. John Vianney, we aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events as appropriate;

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9:30am)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher (in excess of ten sessions/five school days).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately by the Pupil Welfare Service.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

If your child's attendance is being monitored by the Pupil Welfare Service you must provide evidence for any absence (medical letter, appointment card) or the absence will be recorded as unauthorised leading to further sanctions from the Local Authority.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence by telephone or email.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;

- Send out an absence enquiry letter or call at your address if we cannot contact you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Welfare Officer linked to school if your child's attendance is being monitored who may contact you directly by telephone or with a visit to the home address.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Pupil Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The doors are closed in the morning at 8.55am. We want our children to be in classes at this time for registration to start their learning promptly at 9.00am. A child is classed as 'late' if they are not ready to start their learning at 9.00am. If a child arrives after 9.30am this is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Senior Team Leader or a member of the pastoral support team, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays In Term Time:

Information regarding School Holiday patterns must be obtained from the School website or from school directly as we have no control over the term dates displayed on other websites.

Holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

From September 2013, the regulations changed and the amendments made it clear that school may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time may **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS).
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

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In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

Leave for Performances Outside of School

A child may not be absent from school in order to perform or to take part in paid sport or modelling unless a licence has been obtained from the child's local authority. In practice, this means that unless the performance or activity is taking place outside of school hours (for example at a weekend or during school holidays), a child may not rely upon one of the exemptions in section 37(3) in order

to perform as the head teacher may only authorise absence for a child to take part in a performance or activity for which a licence has been obtained.

The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

Religious Absence:

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Blackpool.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Amanda Wooldridge - Assistant Headteacher

Lynda Watkins - First response

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.