

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Attendance Policy

As a Catholic school we seek to work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure the best possible start for each child entrusted to our care. Regular attendance and punctuality are an essential part of this partnership.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Raise pupil achievement through promoting punctuality and attendance levels of 98% or above
- Assist parents, carers and pupils through clear procedures and expectations for staff, parents and pupils regarding attendance
- To safeguard vulnerable children through clear measures for dealing with absence and lateness

Arrival Times and Term Dates

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The school gates open at 08:40am

Children should arrive no later than 08:55am

Parents will receive a list of term dates including INSET days and bank holidays in their child's home school diary at the start of the academic year. If they are in any doubt about particular days, parents should contact the office before that date.

Notification of Lateness or Absence

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Parents should phone the office between 8.30am and 8.55am on the same day and advise the Learning Mentor (Mrs Wilcox) if the child is going to be late or absent.

The reason for absence or lateness must be as specific as possible (e.g. eye infection rather than sick or unwell)

Children arriving after 08:55am are required to report to the Learning Mentor.
(Where the parent has already advised the school of the reason then the child only needs to say that this has happened.)

If no-one has phoned to explain the reason for their lateness the child will be asked to explain.

(Parents should be mindful of the Catholic values we seek to promote at Saint John Fisher and never ask a child to give an untruthful account of their lateness or absence).

On the first day the child returns to school from an absence the parents should record in the appropriate section of the home school diary the reason for the absence.

(If there is a problem regarding writing the note the Learning Mentor will be happy to complete the section for the parent and invite the parent to sign it. Such assistance would be completely confidential)

Registration procedures

1. Registers will be taken twice daily, once for the morning session, once for the afternoon session.
2. Registers will be dated and clearly marked so that correct information may be entered by the office staff.
3. Morning registers will be completed between 9.00am and 9.10am; afternoon registers will be completed 1.10pm and 1. 20pm and returned to the office.
4. Arrivals after 9.15am are marked 'L'.

Authorised Absence or Lateness

Only the school can authorise an absence.

1. Where the school is satisfied with the parent's explanation for the absence and there have been no previous issues with the child's absence or punctuality record the school will authorise the absence.
2. As long as children return to school straight after Doctor/ dentist appointments they are not are not counted as absences unless the child misses the whole

session. The situation is the same for a child who leaves after registration for a good reason such as illness, visits to secondary school etc.

3. Children should not be kept off for the whole day for such visits unless they are too unwell to attend, in which case the parent must contact the school and send a note in confirming the reason for their absence the next day and it will be counted as an absence.
4. The special circumstances code will be considered for issues such as death in the family, moving house etc. Parents should contact the Learning Mentor, in advance wherever possible, about such requests for absence.

The Learning Mentor will keep a record of the reasons given for all late arrivals and absences and these will be reviewed by the Learning Mentor, Headteacher or appointed Deputy on a regular basis. Other agencies, such as the Educational Welfare Officer, will be involved where lateness or absence is causing concern.

Unauthorised Absence

The Learning Mentor will contact the parents to express concern and advise the Headteacher accordingly when:

- No satisfactory explanation has been given to explain the lateness or absence.
- A child is late more than once in a week; more than twice over a two week period or more than three times over a half term without prior agreement with the school.
- There is reason to doubt the accuracy of the reasons given for the lateness or absence.
- The child's overall attendance falls below 95%

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the home will be recorded.

In cases of persistent lateness/absence the Headteacher and Learning Mentor will contact other agencies such as the Educational Welfare Officer.

At Saint John Fisher we believe in supporting the whole family; our first duty of care, however, is to the child; where there is any doubt regarding the safety and well being of a child the Headteacher or appointed Deputy will report it immediately to Social Services. Our preferred option is an open and honest relationship with our parents or carers; if there is genuine problems please talk to us.

Where the absence or lateness has not been explained to the school's satisfaction or the child's attendance has fallen below 90% **the absence will be unauthorised**

Leave of absence during term time

We have adopted a zero tolerance with regards to holidays during term time; this is in line with the local Authority and Government Guidelines.

Government Legislation from September 1st 2013 states schools can only grant requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.

No holidays will be authorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances such as a family bereavement. Parents should contact the Learning Mentor re these very exceptional circumstances, who will liaise with the Headteacher.

Parents who take their children out of school during Term Time and the absence has not been authorised may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

We expect 100% attendance and punctuality except for very good reasons.

Absences, lateness and term time holidays will be recorded in the End of Year individual school report.

The school will encourage punctuality and good attendance by finding ways though rewards such as House Cups, end of year prizes for 100% attendees and so forth.

Remember, our attendance policy is to help us to help you to give your child the best possible start in life.