



ST. WINEFRIDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

Welcome to St Winefride's where we come together to learn, laugh, listen, live and love in the presence of Jesus.

At our school, we believe that everyone is valued as a unique gift from God.

We work together to create an engaging learning environment, where all children are challenged to achieve their full potential.

At St Winefride's Catholic Primary school, we recognise in everyone, the dignity and beauty of the person, made in the image and likeness of God. We value each individual and respect them regardless of their background and circumstances because they are our brothers and sisters in the family of God, and we are called to love and value everyone.

Rationale

At St Winefride's we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. Good attendance and punctuality are essential, if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

It is important that a conscientious attitude towards school attendance is embedded from the very first term that children attend school. The importance of establishing good habits of regular attendance cannot be over emphasised, and a pattern initiated and sustained throughout a child's school career. Patterns of poor attendance and punctuality can be indicative of difficult home circumstances and may be referred to pastoral care.

The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) can work together in partnership. The school will maintain good attendance records and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All schools are now required to complete an absence return termly and annually and publish information about authorised and unauthorised absence. Excessive absence from school affects children's learning.

This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that Parents are fully aware of the school's Policy on Attendance.
- To ensure that children are made aware of the value of regular attendance and thus create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality are the 'norm'.

- To promote regular attendance and punctuality by being vigilant and maintaining the school internal absence record.
- To ensure that a child's early learning is not jeopardised by poor attendance.
- To provide good links with parents and school.
- To maintain an effective working relationship with the EWS.
- Staff to be actively involved in taking responsibility for encouraging good attendance and punctuality.
- On transfer, to inform secondary schools of any attendance problems and to liaise with EWS where necessary.

The Headteacher will be responsible for providing attendance information and will work with EWO (Education Welfare Officer) to establish clear allocation of tasks and responsibilities in terms of referrals and action planning. This policy will continue to develop in association with staff to ensure that the school has commitment to consistency and continuity.

Communication

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the school prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school meetings held each year for children about to enter the Reception class, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arrive at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Not being picked up on time is also stressful, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which result in them becoming unhappy and not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this and need to communicate any problems/upsets occurring outside school to child's class teacher.

Absence due to illness

All parents are asked to contact school on the first day of their child's absence. This can be done by telephoning. This message is then logged into the 'Absence Book' and passed onto the child's class teacher.

If the absence lasts more than one day, parents/carers should then send a letter into school on child's return. All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the clerical assistant contacts the parent/carer when she reviews the registers at the end of each week.

Occasionally parents/carers will receive a letter from school asking them to account for child's absence despite sending letter into school. We apologise in advance for this but from time to time letters do go astray or children forget to pass them on to their class teacher.

School staff **need not accept** a parental explanation for a pupil's absence whether written, telephoned or given in person, if they doubt the explanation. It is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory.

Leave of Absence

Parents/carers are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday.

In exceptional circumstances, only the Headteacher may grant leave of absence during the school year. All such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher. From the 1st September 2013, Headteachers in all schools will only be allowed to grant 'leave of absence' (time off during term time) for 'exceptional circumstances' only. The Department for Education says that family holidays are not 'exceptional circumstances'.

If parents/carers do decide to take children out of school during term time, it will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. In line with Cheshire West and Chester Council guidelines – If Parents/carers do choose to take children out of school in term time their request may be refused and they may be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice, the cost of which is £60, per child per parent, if paid within 21 days and £120 if it is paid within 28 days. If the fixed penalty notice is not paid legal action will be taken by the Local Authority

Lateness

Lateness is discouraged and families are urged to arrive on time. Any Child who arrives after 9.05am should be 'signed in' to the Late Arrivals Book by an adult (preferably parent or carer). The child will then be marked as **late (L)** in the register.

If the child arrives after 9.30am this will be recorded as an absence and unless parents/carers give reasons, either verbally or written, this could be logged as an unauthorised absence. **All children arriving in late must be registered into the Late Arrivals Book for Health and Safety reasons.** The late book is monitored regularly by Headteacher and clerical assistant who is responsible for following up unauthorised absences.

Children leaving school premises for appointments during day must be noted in **Early Leaver's Book** and signed back upon return, if they do so.

LATENESS = LOST LEARNING	
(Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost!

Truancy

All the staff at St. Winefride's are concerned about children's regular attendance and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified. They, then, contact the parent and the Education Welfare Officer. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that the reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent, then the Headteacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

Education Welfare Service

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, then the Headteacher will contact the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who could decide to take action.

Referral to EWS

Referral to the EWS will be considered in following circumstances:

- Where continued occasional absences in attendance of less than 80%.
- Where a pupil has been absent for 5 or more consecutive days and contact with parents/carers cannot be made.
- Patterns of intermittent attendance emerge, without authorised reason.
- Where truancy is suspected and the school is unable to contact parents or fails to receive a satisfactory response.
- School refusal.
- Concern where there is knowledge of social/emotional/medical problems in the family.
- Exclusions and behavioural problems.
- Frequent absences are condoned by parents/carers.

Only the school is empowered to authorise absence and only unauthorised absence can be counted in evidence if prosecution is to be considered.

The school will consider: -

- Learning Support, Special Educational Needs.
- Parents/carers feeling 'welcome' in school.
- Induction procedures after long period of absence.

Parents will be informed of the following:

- Their responsibilities.
- Their legal obligations.
- What counts as a valid reason for absence.
- What actions can and will be taken by school and EWS.
- That truancy/condoned unjustified absence will be challenged.

These issues will be handled sensitively but with no diminution of school's expectations.

Home School Agreement

We believe that in order to strengthen the opportunities available to each individual, education at St Winefride's should be a partnership between home and school.

Appendix A

Recording School Attendance and Absence

Children's names are listed in attendance registers in alphabetical order, with addresses and dates of birth. The registers are called at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions and then sent to the office. Registers are marked with a strict colour coding.

Black/blue ink for attendances

Red only for absences

We also have to use certain recommended symbols:

- /\ Present - am/pm (blue/black)
- V Taking part in educational visit (blue/black)
- B Attending another educational establishment (blue/black)

- Absent – red

Within the absent symbol ○ we should use:

- H Holiday (red)
- M Medical/dental appointment (red)
- I illness (red)
- L Late but before register has been closed – more than 10 mins but less than 30 mins after registration with no reason for late arrival (i.e. not holiday or medical)
- U After the register has closed and is classed as a full session (unauthorised)
- P Teacher's strike action

- E Exclusion (red)
- Empty red ○ - unauthorised absence
- G Unauthorised holiday in term time



F
A
I
T
H



Attendance is important to me – St Winefride's

Attendance is important to me. It helps me

To learn, grow and achieve.

To reach my full potential and let my light shine.

Every day I learn something new, and I am working towards building knowledge and skills and embedding this in my long-term memory.

Nothing is impossible if I am in the classroom.

Dedication leads to development.

Achievement comes from being in school and growing academically, socially, spiritually and morally.

Non-attendance can result in gaps in my learning, and I don't want this.

Can do attitudes are important in our school.

Everything is possible when I am present!