

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery

## Attendance Policy April 2019

*Living, learning and loving happily together with Christ at the centre*



### Policy Review

*This policy will be reviewed in full by the governing body annually.  
The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the governing body on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019.  
It is due for review on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (up to 12 months from the above date).*

*Signature Linda Payne  
Executive Headteacher*

*Date 4.4.19*

*Signature Vivienne Morgan  
Chair of Governors*

*Date: 4.4.19*

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children in our school community to maximise their learning. We recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil progress.

This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

### **Responsibilities & Expectations**

- The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- Only the Executive Head or Head of School can authorise absence.
- The school will provide attendance details on the child's annual report and at parent evenings.
- The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.
- The school has a responsibility to safeguard all pupils and therefore will take all necessary steps to make sure a pupil is safe if they are not in school.
- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school and do not automatically have the right to take them on holiday during term time. Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.
- Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers must inform the school on the **1<sup>st</sup> day** of absence and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain **daily** contact with the school until the child returns to school.
- All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.
- All pupils must remember to hand any note from their parent to school providing reasons for absence.
- All pupils will be expected to be ready to learn.

### **If a Child is Absent**

The school will:

- Record notification of absence.
- If notification is not received, telephone parents/carers by 9.30am on the first day of absence and record the outcome of the call.
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence.
- Keep written notification from parents/carers on file.
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Write to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.

### **Lateness**

- Registers are taken at 8.50am. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as late.
- Afternoon sessions begin at 1.00pm for EYFS, KS1, Lower Key Stage Two and 1.30pm for upper KS2 when the register is taken again. Children returning from home lunch after this time will be recorded as late.
- Registers will close at 9.00am and 1.30pm. Any pupil arriving after the registers have closed will be recorded as unauthorised absence unless there are exceptional circumstances for such late arrival.
- Parents/carers will be expected to sign in via Inventory, and give a reason for their child's lateness
- It is important that children are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.
- Parents/Carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality

### **Absence due to Illness**

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. The Executive Head or Head of School will make a decision on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised dependant on the information provided by a parent/carer. Each decision is considered on a case by case basis. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register
- ***The school operates a '1<sup>st</sup> day response' policy. This means that if we have not been notified by 9.30am to tell us why a child is not coming to school that day we will contact his/her parents/carers.***
- Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence; being 'ill' is not enough.
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide proof of absence stating that their child is too ill to attend school.
- Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time of absence through illness by a doctor, they are expected to contact the school each day to let us know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis by our Local Authority Attendance Officer (LA AO) to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc. They may ask to see parents/carers if attendance is not satisfactory.

### **Absence due to Medical Appointments**

- We would request that all medical appointments, if possible, are made after school.
- If a medical appointment is known in advance, parents/carers must notify the school in writing. If an emergency appointment is made, please phone the school before 9.00am.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The child must be signed out using Inventory. They must sign in again, using Inventory, on return.

### **Term Time Holiday**

There have been amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

These remove all reference to family holiday and extended leave therefore:

- **NO** leave of absence will be granted
- *Parents may make an application for leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance*
- *The Executive Head or Head of School will decide whether this application will be granted*
- *The Executive Head or Head of School will decide the number of days granted for any leave of absence*
- *Leave of absence taken without permission will be unauthorised*
- *Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School will decide what is deemed as an exceptional circumstance*
- *A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from a leave of absence where permission has been granted after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s) or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate pupil.*

### **Monitoring Attendance**

- Doors are open from 8:40am and pupils may enter the building at that time.
- Registers will be taken at 8.50am each morning. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as being late.
- Registers are taken electronically.
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted to request an improvement in punctuality.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.
- The school will monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis.
- Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for their child's absence by the end of the week will be contacted.
- Each month, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 90% attendance will be notified.
- Pupils with less than 85% attendance will automatically be discussed with the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) and appropriate action identified and agreed.

### **Records**

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the school profile.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School who will write to the parents/carers.
- When attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue. When it falls below 85%, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting and the pupil will be made known to the Local Authority Attendance Office (LAAO).

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level has a significant impact on any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

### **Integrated Working**

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance

### **Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)**

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School works in partnership with the allocated (LAAO) to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.
- The Executive Headteacher/Head of School and appropriate staff meet with the (LAAO) for regular meetings to discuss and review attendance.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and the (LAAO) work with identified individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance.
- If a child has 10 days absence that are irregular or consecutive the School will inform the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) who will review the pupil's attendance.
- When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the (LAAO), the school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, invite you to a meeting to offer support or may make a formal referral to the Local Authority.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School rewards good attendance termly and annually.
- 100% Attendance and Excellent Attendance certificates are awarded termly.
- Hertfordshire Attendance certificates are awarded for 100% and outstanding attendance over the whole year.
- The School also rewards children who make significant progress in addressing attendance issues and lateness.
- Class rewards are also given for attendance.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.
- Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will seek advice and guidance from the Education Support for Medical Absence.

### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

- The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and guidance as determined by the Local Authority. This changed on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.
- A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (7 ½ days, one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term. **Penalty notices will involve each parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.**
- Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444(1).

### **Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters**

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School
- Administrators with responsibility for attendance
- All class teachers
- Governing Board

### **Monitoring & Review**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Executive Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year or earlier if deemed necessary.

Signed *Linda Payne*  
Executive Headteacher

*Vivienne Morgan*  
Chair of Governors

Date 4.4.19

To be reviewed: April 2020