



St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

We will prepare the way by loving, living and learning with the Lord

Dear Parent/ Carer,

At St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, we place a high emphasis on the importance of regular and punctual school attendance. We believe through good attendance at school children will achieve higher attainment, have better opportunities and establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives.

Children are expected to have an attendance level of 97-100%

We understand that there may be unavoidable circumstances on occasions when your child is absent from school and we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the school absence procedures.

Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) supports school with the processes associated with children's attendance including legal monitoring services. CSAWS also provide support to help reduce the number of persistently absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

Illness:

Occasionally, your child may wake up on a school day and say that they feel unwell. Parents will assess and decide if they think their child is well enough to attend school or needs to be kept at home. If your child has no temperature but has a cough, cold, headache or earache then (as with adults) medical advice is to give them paracetamol (Calpol, etc) and send them to school. We will always contact you if your child's condition worsens or if we believe it is contagious such as chicken pox, vomiting, etc. If you're not sure if your child's illness is classed as infectious and they need to be kept off school then contact the school office who will offer advice and information.

If you decide that your child is unable to attend school due to illness the following procedure applies:

- If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the 1st day of absence by 9.30am to inform the school of the reason for absence.
- Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. Further evidence of a child's illness may be requested if their attendance is an ongoing concern.

Medical and Dental Appointments:

- Where possible such appointments should be booked outside of school hours
- When a pupil has a medical or dental appointment this should be confirmed with an appointment card or letter.
- Pupils are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and return to school after the appointment. Any absence outside of the appointment/travel time will be unauthorised.

•

Unexplained absences:

Unexplained absences from school give serious cause for concern as the school is unable to confirm the whereabouts and safety of a child.

- At 9.15am the school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents or reason given.
- School staff will attempt to make telephone contact with parents to ascertain a reason for the child's absence from school.
- If Parent/carer cannot be contacted, then school staff will contact the other emergency contacts for the child.
- If staff are unable to contact parents or other emergency contacts or ascertain the reasons for a child absence this will be followed by a home visit by either members of school staff or a Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Officer.
- As we have a safeguarding duty for our pupils it is essential that we know where all our pupils are during the school day and if we are unable to ascertain this it may be necessary to contact the police to undertake a safe and well check.
- **School is legally required to have more than one emergency contact for each pupil.**
- **Please ensure the school has up-to-date addresses and telephone numbers**

Leave of Absence Requests (Exceptional Circumstances):

- **All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional.**
- A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required
- **If the Head teacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional; the leave of absence will not be authorised.** A letter will be sent to each parent informing them of this decision for each child and warning them of the legal implications of the absence.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is still taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register. These absences will be referred immediately to the Local Authority for consideration and could result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice

Persistent absence and unauthorised absence.

We take a proactive approach to improving the attendance of individual children whose attendance falls below 93%. Children who have less than 90% attendance are classed by the DFE as persistently absent. We will communicate concerns about poor attendance to parents and use an escalating approach including letters, meetings in school and/or a

referral to the Central School Attendance Welfare Service Officer, in order to support parents in improving attendance.

Where children have 10 or more unauthorised absences we will refer to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. This can include:

- Written warning letters
- The issue of Penalty Notices (£60 per parent per child, increasing to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days).
- Prosecution for non-school attendance.

Parents can support regular school attendance by

- Making sure their child leaves for school early enough to arrive at school on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.
- Making any medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Not taking children out of school for holidays in term time or for other unnecessary reasons.

We thank you for your support and co operation in helping us to continue to secure and raise school attendance for all children at our school

If you would like more information regarding the school's approach to securing good school attendance please see the school website for the attendance policy and procedures.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter please contact Mr Gallagher