

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

GROWING IN FAITH

*Our vision at St Catherine's Catholic Primary School
and all we do, and aspire to be,
is centred on the love, life and teaching of Jesus,
and rooted in the faith of the Catholic Church.*

AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE

*Our aim is to build a loving, happy, safe and welcoming school where
everyone has the opportunity and support to recognise, celebrate and develop
their God given gifts and talents, learning in a creative and friendly school
family.*

LEARNING FOR LIFE

*Journeying together with each other,
we work in harmony
to provide outstanding Catholic Education
for all our pupils preparing them to fulfil their mission
to the world in which we live.*

Policy Adopted: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 2023

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1. Aims and Objectives

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. At St Catherine's, we aspire to create a belief throughout our school community that every day in school counts.

Pupils

We want our pupils to love coming to school. We want them to have a wide breadth of experiences and feel that they play an important role in school life. We want them to be excited every morning about the possible learning opportunities that lie in the day ahead. We want them to feel that if they were missing school then they would be missing out. We want to reward individual pupils and groups of pupils for excellent attendance and their efforts in getting to school every day. We want to praise pupils and families for improvements in attendance.

Parents/Carers

We want parents/carers to understand the importance of excellent attendance. We want parents/carers to be open and honest with us in regards to matters affecting attendance. We want parents/carers to feel supported if they are having difficulties in getting their children to school.

School Staff

We want our staff to create a warm, nurturing and inviting school environment for pupils. We want them to communicate clearly with parents/carers on our expectations in regards to attendance and how we prioritise attendance at our school. We want them to follow our attendance policy closely, provide support to parents/carers where needed and be prompt in carrying out any necessary actions. We want our front line staff to challenge parents on the reasoning behind absence and ensure parents are aware of the repercussions of continued poor attendance.

2. Expectations

Our attendance policy is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities which we make clear to all stakeholders. Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. **Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been given. Family breaks/holidays taken during term time are marked as unauthorised.

Timings

Gates to the school open at 8.40am. At 8.45am the bell is rung to signify the start of the school day for all pupils and pupils make their way to their classrooms. At 8.55am, the school gates are closed and registers are closed in class. Pupils should be in class and ready for learning by this time. Any pupils arriving to school after this time must be brought to the school office and signed in on the electronic screen by parents/carers, giving reasons for lateness. At 3.05pm the school gates open for pick-up. At 3.10pm the school day finishes for pupils in Reception and at 3.15pm the school day finishes for all other pupils. Early pick up of children is not authorised, unless for certain medical appointments or other unique circumstances which have been agreed with the school. Late pick up of children will be monitored and if this becomes regular, the school may have to consider it a safeguarding issue and refer it to West Sussex Children's Services.

Requesting leaves of absence

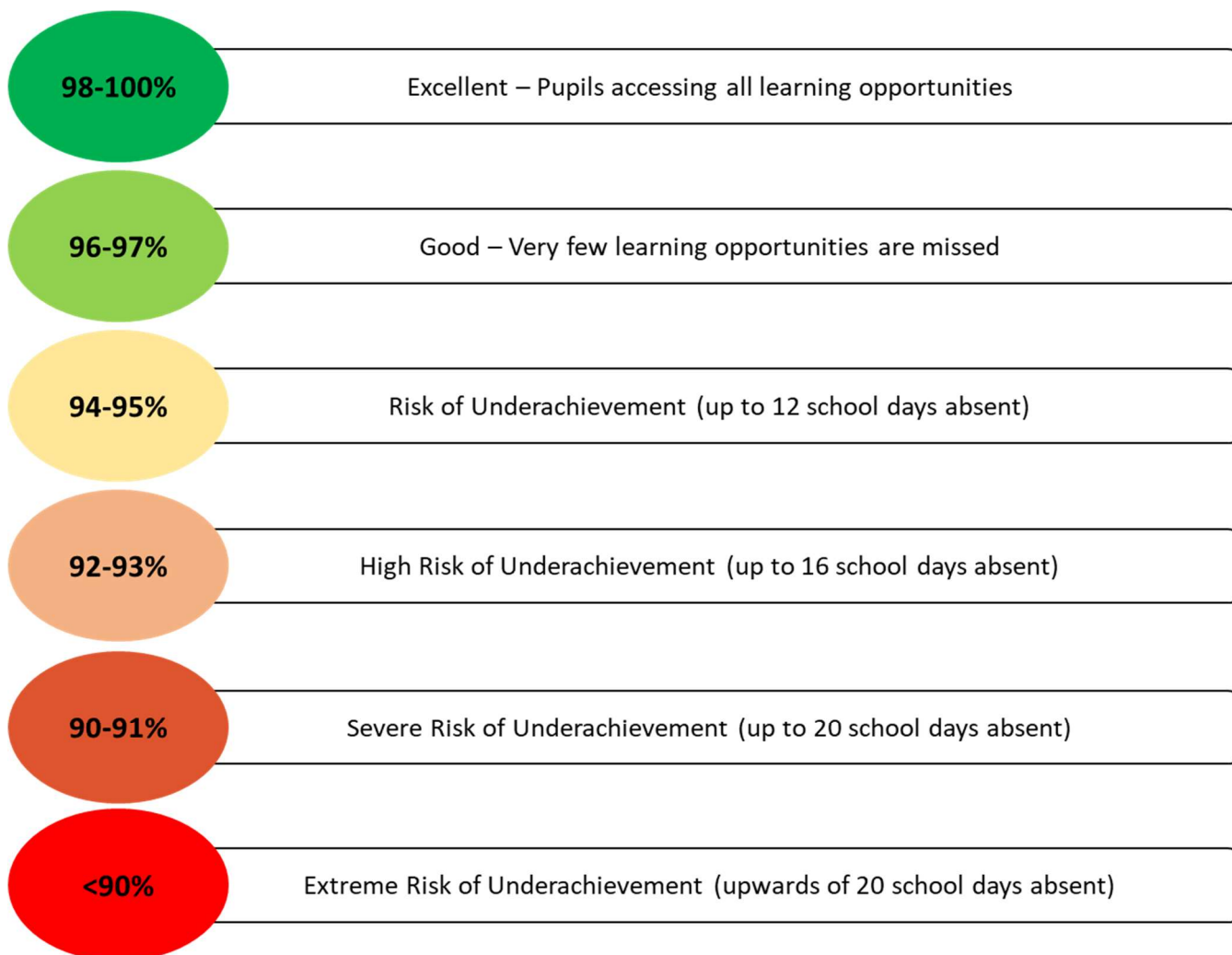
To request a leave of absence for a pupil for whatever reason, a form (which can be collected from the office) must be filled and handed in at the office at least two weeks before the initial date of absence requested. These will be considered in a fair and consistent manner by the Headteacher, taking the reasoning behind the absence, whether or not the request was submitted at least two weeks in advance and the current attendance data for each pupil in question into account. These requests will be responded to within 3 working days. Medical appointments, where possible, should be booked for outside of school hours. If a medical appointment is booked within school time, evidence of this appointment will need to be provided. The school can provide a letter to be given to medical practitioners to inform them of our policy if parents/carers are having difficulty booking appointments outside of school hours.

Informing the School of Unexpected Absence

If a pupil cannot come to school for whatever reasons, parents/carers must inform the school by phone, parentmail or email before 9.30am, stating clearly what those reasons are. The school may make a follow up call to find out more about the reasoning behind the absence.

Levels of Attendance

In line with national expectations, we expect pupils' attendance to be at or above 96%. Attendance below this figure has the potential to impact on achievement, as detailed in the diagram below. Attendance below 90% is regarded as persistent absence and leads to more formalised support.



3. Responsibilities

All members of the school community play an important part in supporting the school to achieve the best it can, by helping it reach its attendance objectives. Within the school community there are certain groups which hold specific responsibilities in relation to this.

Governing Body

- Ensuring that regular attendance figures are shared with the LA and DfE
- Positively promoting good attendance within the school
- Requesting regular information from the Headteacher on any aspect of the school, including attendance
- Identifying and attending relevant training regarding attendance matters
- Monitoring attendance patterns with the Headteacher
- Reviewing and developing the attendance policy

Headteacher and SLT

- Positively promoting good attendance within the school
- Ensuring attendance is seen as a high profile across the school and is a regular topic for discussion at SLT and staff meetings
- Overseeing the implementation of attendance policy and procedure
- Ensuring the collection of accurate statistical data
- Developing efficient monitoring and evaluation systems
- Reporting to Governing Body

Class Teachers

- Accurate recording of the daily electronic registration list
- Communicating concerns to the Headteacher/DSL as appropriate
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality within the class
- Maintaining positive links with parents whilst communicating concerns

Administrative staff

- Maintaining the electronic registration system
- Receiving and recording telephone communication from parents
- Assisting in the collection of data and presentation of data to aid analysis and evaluation

Parents

- Positively promoting good attendance within the school for their child/children
- Ensuring their children have good attendance, are punctual and keep school informed of any absence
- Ensuring any request for absence is made within the appropriate time scale
- Responding positively and promptly to school requests for any further information on absence
- Keeping school informed of any issues or medical condition that may affect their child's absence
- Ensuring school has up to date contact details

4. Processes

To allow us to manage attendance effectively and to ensure we are striving towards our aims and objectives through a transparent and fair approach, the school carries out regular attendance processes.

First Day Contact

If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted by parents/carers with a reason, the school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence. The reasoning behind this is to ensure first of all that the pupil is safe. If contact cannot be made via phone or email, the school may take other actions to establish that the pupil is safe. This could mean contacting any external agencies who are involved with the pupil or family. It could also mean a member of staff making a house call. This is one of the important reasons why the school must have the most up to date contact details for all parents/carers.

Attendance Tracker

For pupils whose level of attendance is a cause for concern, the front office maintain an attendance tracker which keeps SLT up to date on a daily basis of the attendance of these key individuals.

Attendance Data Analysis

On a monthly basis, the Headteacher carries out a more formal analysis of attendance data. This helps inform any changes to the attendance tracker that need to be made or if any pupils have crossed the thresholds for further action to be taken (e.g. meetings, letters and referrals). Analysis is carried out on both an individual and group basis, allowing the school to identify any trends which need to be addressed.

5. Promoting and Incentivising Excellent Attendance

It is important for the school to praise and reward both good attendance and improving attendance by individual pupils and groups of pupils.

Class Attendance Trophy

The class with the best attendance each month keeps the attendance trophy on display in their classroom for the next month. This award is given out by SLT in assembly and details of the winning class included in the newsletter.

Individual Attendance Awards

At the end of each term, certificates are awarded to pupils for attendance over 96% up to that point in the school year. Those with 96-97% receive the bronze award, those with 98-99% receive the silver award and those with 100% attendance receive the gold award. For those pupils with legitimate and school authorised reasons why they cannot attend school (e.g. serious illness, ongoing serious medical treatment, reduced timetable, etc.), their attendance percentage will be calculated so as to not include these authorised absences.

Improved Attendance Postcard

If a sustained improvement in attendance has been made by a pupil, a postcard is sent to the pupil from the Headteacher commending them on their achievement.

6. Formalised Support and Referrals

If attendance for a pupil is falling below our expectations, we will communicate with parents/carers accordingly. We will provide appropriate support, drawing on a wide range of strategies and involving wider support services where necessary. If the support put in place does not yield the necessary improvements, the school may decide to make a referral to West Sussex.

Meetings

When attendance falls below our expectations for a pupil, without any valid reasoning, we will invite parents to school to discuss how we might all work together to ensure the pupil in question's attendance improves.

Letters

Once the following attendance thresholds are met, appropriate letters will be sent to parents/carers notifying them of their pupil's current attendance figures and explaining what will happen next if this trend continues.

Threshold
Attendance below 95%
Attendance below 90%
Attendance is below 95% mostly due to illness for which medical evidence has not been provided
Evidence Request to Medical Practitioner
Referral – Unauthorised absence
Referral – Fixed Penalty Notice
Lateness Letter

Non-attendance Referral

If attendance is not improving following support from the school, then a non-attendance referral to West Sussex Pupil Entitlement will be made where appropriate. This referral is suitable for pupils who have had a minimum of 20 unauthorised absences (10 days) within the past 1-2 academic school terms, where absence is entrenched and on-going. By making this referral, the school are asking the Pupil Entitlement Investigation team to investigate attendance issues and consider legal action.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Referral

If a pupils has accrued 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 school week period including unauthorised holiday in term time, late after the register closes and other unauthorised absences, then where appropriate, the school will make a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Referral. A fixed penalty notice (FPN) is a time limited opportunity for the parent/carer to accept their liability for an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996 rather than the matter being referred to the court immediately.