

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

St Hugh's School provides a welcoming, safe and secure environment for all.

Our school aims to be a community which reflects real gospel values of love and forgiveness. A community in which each individual, child or adult, can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding; so as to broaden their appreciation of the world, its cultures and its people.

Every day Growing in God's Love

Introduction

This is a successful and happy school and your child plays their part in making it so. However, for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for St. Hugh's is 97% and we will keep you updated regularly about how your child's attendance compares to this level.

Our target is to achieve better than 97%. We are aiming for this level because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling. We believe we can achieve this and be amongst the best attended schools in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

We have a range of initiatives in school to encourage children to come to school every day. We have a Community Welfare Officer, Miss K. Bower, who carefully monitors the attendance and punctuality figures. She works with children and families who need support with attendance. You can contact her at the school if you need any advice or support with any matters relating to attendance and punctuality.

To encourage and reward regular attendance we:

- Present an attendance cup in assembly to the class with the highest attendance each week.
- Allow the class with the highest attendance to have dinner first the following week.
- Give a daily treat to each class with 100% attendance (e.g. cracker, rice cake, yoghurt, biscuit, fruit, cheese).
- Give vouchers and certificates to each child with 100% attendance for a full term.
- Display each class's achievements on our attendance display.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is better not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can impact on a child's educational attainment and progress. We need parents' fullest support to address this.

We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level or at risk of reaching it and parents will be informed of this immediately so that together we can put a plan in place to get that child back into school. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school by 9.30am, on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- If your child is absent for more than 3 days you must make contact with the school again.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If we do not receive a response and your child has not returned to school after 3 days, we will contact the Education Welfare Officer.
- If your child is absent on a regular basis, we will invite you in to discuss the situation with the school. This matter may then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0151 233 3916.

Leave of absence in Term Time

Leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is no entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance to the Headteacher. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Please be aware however that in line with Local Authority and Government guidance, leave of absence in term time will only be considered in the most exceptional of circumstances.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will never be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into a new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS)
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in at that time. If they arrive after 8.55am, they will be marked late. Your child can arrive in school from 8.45am and go straight in to class.

Although we do not want children arriving late to school, we would rather they arrive late than not come in at all. Please do not keep your child off school if they are going to be late. Remember, it is better to miss a few minutes at the beginning of the day than to miss the whole day.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. Our Community Welfare Officer, Miss K. Bower, monitors punctuality figures and will contact parents if their children are regularly late for school. She keeps a 'late book' to record the names of all children arriving late each day. She is on the playground at 8.45am each morning with the Head Teacher and/or Deputy Head Teacher to congratulate the children and parents who arrive on time.

To encourage and reward punctuality we:

- Present a punctuality cup in assembly to the class with the best punctuality record each week.
- Allow the class with the highest punctuality rate to have dinner second the following week (after the class that won the attendance cup).

Summary

Every parent has a legal duty to ensure their child is in school every day. We are committed to working with children and families to ensure this happens. Do not hesitate to contact school if you need any help, advice or support with any matters relating to attendance and punctuality.