



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## St Edward's Catholic Academy

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# **St Edward's Catholic Academy Attendance Policy**

*True Mind, True Heart, True Spirit*

Please also refer to:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Disability Discrimination Scheme
- Health and Safety policy
- Learning and Teaching policy

## **Introduction**

At St Edward's we pride ourselves on our strong Catholic ethos based on the Gospel values and teaching of the Church. This policy reflects and supports the aims of our Mission Statement:

'True Mind, True Heart, True Spirit'

At St Edward's Academy we believe that every individual is unique and made in God's own image. We accept the trust that parents and carers have placed in putting their children into our care, as a privilege. Therefore everything we do is aimed at developing each child to his or her full spiritual, academic and social potential.

**I know the plans I have for you says the Lord,  
Plans to give you hope and a future.**

*Jer. 29:11*

The information in this policy outlines the systems and procedures for creating the means to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality that should be followed.

It is vital that we are consistent in our approach in tackling these issues. Clear systems will ensure that all stakeholders know what is expected of them.

### **Purpose of the policy.**

Regular attendance is essential if a pupil is to have a successful education. Poor attendance can create a barrier to a pupil's general personal development.

St Edward's Catholic Academy believes that attendance can be improved if:

- Registers are kept accurately and according to the agreed regulations using RM Integris:
- There is an effective monitoring of attendance
- All stakeholders work together – pupils, parents/carers, teachers, internal admin, external agencies and Governors.
- There is a clear whole academy policy which deals with the causes of non-attendance with appropriate follow-up action and support.
- Rewards and benefits for good attendance are clearly displayed and promoted throughout the academy and wider community.

Ultimately, attendance levels will depend upon the quality of the school's curriculum, ethos and relationships inside the academy.

### **Responsibilities:**

Parent/carers are responsible by law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parent/carers should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with the academy staff and other relevant agencies to overcome any problems which may affect a child's overall attendance. The policy will be available on the academy's website.

The academy encourages and values high attendance rates. The academy recognises the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parent/carers and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The academy takes a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with pupils and their parents/carer and provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

### **Roles:**

#### **St Edward's Catholic Academy will:**

Monitor attendance through daily registration. Registers are taken in the morning and at the start of the afternoon session:

- Encourage good attendance through regular assemblies and promotional material and investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism
- Work closely with parent/carer and other external agencies should attendance or punctuality give a cause for concern
- Celebrate and reward good attendance



### **Parents and Pupils will:**

- Ensure that they attend the academy regularly and on time
- Have individual records of attendance provided by the academy annually which will be incorporated into the pupil's yearly report to parents
- Have their child in the academy before 08.55 when the gate closes. **Registers will close at 9.05am, after 9.05am a child will be registered as late, after 09.15 a child will be registered as an unauthorised late**

### **Senior Management Team and Class Teachers and Office Clerk will:**

- Keep an accurate register at the beginning of the morning session and the afternoon session, using the class register provided
- Make a note of late arrival on registers recording the time of arrival on the centralised record
- Collect letters from parent/carers with regards to absences and pass to the office clerk, correspondence will be filed in the central records in the main academy office
- Inform the **Pupil and Leadership Support Manager** promptly if there are concerns about a particular pupil highlighting attendance irregularities or consistencies
- Inform and communicate with staff during the weekly staff meeting of pupils who are being tracked and monitored
- Liaise with relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and give advance notice of educational visits or pupils involved in off site visits during the academy day (ensuring that if an off-site visit is taking place during a meal session so that free school meals can be organised for applicable pupils)

### **Office Admin will:**

- Send out first day absence text messages
- Analyse the text message reports and acknowledge receipt of texts sent to parents/carers
- Alert a member of SLT if text messages have not been acknowledged by parents/carers
- Produce attendance data for SLT
- Record correspondence and messages in relation to attendance

### **Pupil and Leadership Support Manager will:**

- Monitor attendance and set targets to improve attendance using Attendance Tracking Log Sheet for pupils with attendance of less than 95% or below
- Make telephone contact with parent to establish reasons for absence: Recording information in pupil file
- Send letter to parents/carers outlining concerns/consequences if unauthorised absence continues
- Carry out an unannounced home visit to establish persistent non-attendance: (visit to be carried out by a minimum of 2 members of staff, one to be SLT)
- Letter contact with parent asking for future medical evidence of absence/s. If not provided invite parents/carers into academy to discuss attendance concerns
- If improvement is not evident invite parents/carers into academy for an attendance meeting

- Liaise with Early Help providers at The Pingle Academy and make appropriate referrals
- Supply information to associate staff for display purposes and to Assistant Headteacher for attendance and punctuality for achievement assembly
- Provide a termly report to SRSCMAT and Local Governing Body about academy attendance
- Research Government information on attendance

#### **Governors will:**

- Scrutinise attendance and punctuality data at Governors' meetings, this will be presented to them on the Headteacher's Report produced termly

#### **Request for leave of absence in Exceptional Circumstances.**

Schools will no longer be able to authorise leave of absence for holidays in term time. *The Statutory Instrument, 2013 no: 756, amends the Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 to remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.* The amendments make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of academy days a child can be away from academy if the leave is granted. **It is at the discretion of the Headteacher if any leave of absence is authorised.**

For a pupil to be given leave of absence in exceptional circumstances a letter must be written to the Headteacher stating the circumstances and dates and times required. A letter will be written back to the parent stating if the leave of absence in exceptional circumstances has been granted. Every school day really does matter and we urge you to consider this before booking holidays during term time. School absence will have an impact on all lessons, intervention sessions and assessments.

All requests for leave will be dealt with on an individual basis and considered on their merits. New DFE guidance states that head teachers will only be able to authorise leave during term time in exceptional circumstances. This is a circumstance that has occurred / will occur, due to significant / mandatory, external influences, where all other options for the child remaining at school have been exhausted. For example, a day may be authorised for bereavement, graduation, or for a wedding of a close family member.

- Exceptional circumstances are not availability of cheap holidays and travel arrangements, days overlapping with the start and end of term, or birthdays of pupils or family members.
- Any request must be made in writing at least two weeks prior to the absence (except in the case of bereavement). The school will respond to each parent with their decision.
- If a child is absent from school for more than 3 days without authorisation, the case will be referred to the local authority for a penalty notice to be issued.
- If the school has evidence that a child has been absent from school for a holiday and the parents have not sought/ been given approval then a penalty notice will be issued.

## **Targeting and Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality:**

At St Edward's Catholic Academy we widely publicise the benefits of regular attendance and the link to better learning outcomes. We also highlight the benefits of improving leadership, communication, teamwork and problem solving skills through assemblies and during Mass and Class Worship. Our attendance is clearly displayed for all stakeholders to see. On a weekly basis attendance figures for the academy and class groups are shared during staff meetings and publicised on the academy's newsletter.

## **Monitoring of Attendance Procedure:**

'First Day' absence texts are sent by the office clerk if a parent/carer has not contacted the academy with a reason for absence before 9.30am.

'First Day' absence calls must be made on the first day of absence, if the parent/carer has not contacted the academy subsequent to the 'First Day' absence text. The purpose of the call is to:

1. Ascertain the reason for absence
2. Demonstrate to parents/carers that we are committed to ensuring good attendance at St Edward's Catholic Academy
3. Provide accurate coding for RM Integris:

## **After making the first day call the Office Clerk will:**

- Enter the correct code into RM Integris explaining absence
- Make sure that telephone call/text message receipt is logged
- Inform teaching staff of the reason for absence

## **Staff Weekly Meeting**

At the weekly Teaching and Learning staff meeting the **Pupil and Leadership Support Manager** will highlight pupils who may be showing signs of poor attendance. It is important to bring any concerns of particular pupils to this meeting where preventative action will be discussed and taken.

A list of pupils with an attendance level of below 95% will be recorded in the attendance file. Pupils who meet the threshold of having an attendance level of under 95% will be closely monitored. The aim is to work and communicate with parents/carers to increase this figure. All targets, phone calls and meetings are recorded on the attendance tracking log sheet.

To start this process a below 95% attendance letter is sent to the parent/carer explaining that there are concerns with their child's attendance and the urgent need for improvement with reassurance given that this is a supportive measure, put in place by the academy to avoid further intervention.

Parents of pupils who are being tracked and with an attendance of below 90% will be targeted for daily/weekly tracking and parents/carers informed of concerns by letter. Specific attendance targets will be agreed for a set period. Parents/carers will be signposted to agencies to assist with improving attendance, the referral will be made to The Pingle Academy Early Help Offer, School Health or other relevant agencies.

Parents of pupils who persistently fail to attend the academy will receive a daily telephone call for an explanation of absence, this will be dealt with by the **Pupil Leadership and Support Manager**.

## **Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is acknowledged as being as serious as poor attendance, it has been identified by the academy that the two are often closely linked. All pupils who arrive after 9.05am after the gate has been closed should report to the main office to have their attendance put on to the register. Registers are taken twice daily, once for the morning session, once for the afternoon session. Morning registers will be completed between 8.45am and 9.05am. If your child arrives in school after 8.55 but before 9.05 your child will be marked in the register as an authorised late, after 9.05am they will receive an unauthorised late mark. The gate opens at 08.45am please make every effort to get your child into school before the gate closes at **08.55am**. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided for lateness you will be contacted by the school office for verification.

In all cases the reason for punctuality is checked. Each pupil is treated on an individual basis. In some cases more latitude may be allowed whilst at the same time the lack of punctuality is never condoned. Parents/carers are always involved in cases of regular lateness.