



Saint John Wall Catholic School
A Catholic School For All

Mission Statement

'To educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be'



Attendance Policy

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name,
I am there in their midst."

Matthew 18:20

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Regular school attendance is always of the greatest importance. It is also a matter of law that a child attends school every day. Without good attendance, the efforts of the best teachers and the best school will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. Parents are kept informed about their child's attendance and are made aware that it is their duty in law to ensure their child attends school.

Fact – 7 out of 10 pupils attending over 95% (i.e. missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE 9 → 5 grades.

Fact – Almost all pupils who attend well, leave school with qualifications that will help support their future training and employment.

'It is therefore in all our interests to encourage the children to achieve the highest possible level of attendance.' (LEA Second Strategy for Behaviour and Attendance.)

There are two types of absence, authorised and unauthorised, which are standard across all schools.

The school is required to provide information on a regular basis about authorised/unauthorised absences to the Local Education Authority (LEA).

Saint John Wall Catholic School's record on attendance is above the national average. Each child has a target of at least 96% attendance or higher.

The school is able to translate some absence letters/information regarding attendance for use with relevant families, when required.

Authorised Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Absence can be authorised for certain appointments/events, such as medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours/term times. However, parents should always try hard to make/accept appointments outside of school hours/term times wherever possible.

Pupils will be asked to show appointment letters or cards either before or after the appointment.

A maximum of half a day will be authorised for a medical appointment unless a hospital/doctor's letter shows that a whole day is required. An 'M' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.

Other examples of authorised absence include:

- ✓ Short periods of illness, where it is really not possible for the pupil to attend school - an 'I' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.
- ✓ School trips - a 'V' or 'P' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.
- ✓ Day release from school to attend college (Years 10 & 11 where applicable) a 'B' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.
- ✓ College interviews (Year 11) - a 'J' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.
- ✓ Work Experience (Year 10 where applicable) - a 'W' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence occurs when a pupil is absent and no explanation is provided, or the one given is unacceptable to the school.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Long and/or regular/intermittent periods of illness without medical confirmation.
- Absence from school without good reason, i.e. missed the bus and too late to attend, overslept and too late to attend.
- Pupils attending medical appointments with parents, to translate for them, or providing child care whilst they attend appointments will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absence is shown as an 'O' code on Attendance Records.

Parents and Pupils – First Day Contact

At Saint John Wall Catholic School we try to ensure that parents understand that it is their responsibility **by law** to make sure that their child attends school. They are reminded at their initial interview that they should ring the school as soon as possible on the first morning of absence to inform us about illness etc. They are asked also to provide a signed and dated note when the child returns detailing dates and nature of illness. Sample signatures from parents are kept on record for cross checking handwritten notes brought into school by pupils, following absence.

If the school has not been contacted authentically about a pupil's absence by 9.30am, and the pupil has not been marked as present by their Form Teacher at Registration, the Attendance Officer will check if the pupil is in the required lesson.

When the Attendance Officer believes that the pupil is not in school, they will attempt to contact the parent/carers either by telephone call or by text message. Any child on the

Safeguarding list specifically coded red who is absent will receive a phone call on Day 1, and a home visit on Day 2 if no news.

If no contact is made, and no subsequent appropriate reason is offered for the absence, the day(s) will be marked as Unauthorised Absence. An 'O' code will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.

Home Visits

Should persistent absence of individuals present a problem, 2 members of the Pastoral Team will visit the home to try to ascertain the reason for absence.

Should the Pastoral Team be unable to locate the child or parent/carer. The school will instigate a 'Safe and Well Check' to be carried out by our local Police Officer and we will also inform Children's Advice and Support Services.

Fast Track Attendance

At Saint John Wall Catholic School, we currently follow the Fast Track Attendance programme in line with the Local Education Authority. This gives a structure to monitor attendance, and can result in Penalty Notices being issued to parents whose children do not attend school regularly.

Holidays during term time

Term time holidays continue to cause significant concern and debate. While there are many different views, the direct correlation between attendance and attainment is undeniable. Absence from school interrupts teaching and learning and compromises progress. Birmingham City Council therefore seeks to support Birmingham schools and academies in reducing the amount of education lost to pupil leave of absence in term time. Therefore, holidays during term time will not be authorised.

All parents are informed of the above at induction.

Adverse Weather Conditions or Major Incident Closures

During the winter months, adverse weather conditions can make it difficult to travel to school. Pupils (and staff) are expected to make **reasonable** effort to attend school, and arriving a few minutes late in such conditions, is better than not arriving at all.

Parent/carers should listen to local radio stations or check the internet for specific news about whether the school is closed or open, and take action accordingly.

Where there is a concern to health and safety such as dangerous disease e.g.: COVID-19, it may be necessary to ask your child to remain at home and self-isolate for a period of time until it is safe to return.

If school is closed due to the weather conditions or Health and Safety concerns, your child will be asked to work from home. A 'Y' code will be shown on the pupils Attendance Record.

Where possible, the school will switch to remote education on such days.

The Role of the Teachers

The Form Teacher takes the register each morning at 8.55am. This is a **legal** requirement and children must be present in their form room at **8.55am**.

Subject Teachers take electronic registers throughout the day at the start of each lesson.

If the Form Teacher or Subject Teacher does not see the child in front of them in the room, they will be marked as Absent. It is vital that pupils arrive on time in registration and at each lesson throughout the day.

Late Arrivals

If pupils arrive at school after 8:55am, but before 9:25am they will be given a Late Mark. An 'L' will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.

If pupils arrive after 9:25am they will be given an Unauthorised Late Mark. A 'U' will be shown on the pupil's Attendance Record.

If a pupil arrives late, they spend morning break in detention. When they reach a total of seven lates, they also spend an extra hour in school on the day they are late.

When a pupil has any combination of two or more L or U codes in five school days, they will be required to serve a one hour detention after school on Friday.

If a child is persistently late, the Headteacher or Attendance Officer will invite parents in to discuss the situation and search for a resolution.

Punctuality is a good habit which needs to be learned for future life in society.

Extended periods of unknown absence

When a pupil has been absent from school for a period of 3 days or more and no advance reason has been given by parent/carers, and the Attendance Officer has been unable to contact any of the named contacts, an 'O' code will be shown on the pupils Attendance Record and a home visit completed. The parent/carers will be sent a letter inviting them to a meeting in school with Pastoral Assistant Principal before the pupil returns to school.

When pupils have had 5 or more days of unauthorised absence and all possible lines of enquiry have been followed by school, the Attendance Officer will contact the Children Missing Education team who will then carry out their own investigations.

Attendance Data

Attendance data is issued and published on a weekly basis through:

- Emails to form tutors and heads of year and weekly meetings as a year group team.
- on the television screens in the school building.

Each Head of Year has a weekly update on attendance and has the opportunity to congratulate classes with good attendance in assemblies and/or contact parents of poor attendees.

The Senior Leadership Team discuss attendance data regularly.

Rewards

Excellent/improved attendance is rewarded on a termly basis at celebration assemblies with certificates and gift tokens. This information also feeds into the Saint's league.

Fast Track in Action

- Any pupil with less than 95% attendance and 6 or more sessions of absence, Parents/carers will receive a stage 1 letter to notify them and offer Early Help Support should parent/carers need it.
- If authorised absence persists or parents refuse consent for early help or choose not to engage with our team, or meet to discuss their children's illness absence, a Medical Absence Letter will be sent. Future absences will not be authorised by the Headteacher without medical evidence from a medical professional.
- If your child's attendance falls below 93% with 10 or more sessions of absence, an Early Help Invitation letter is sent to inform you of our continued concern. Parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting at school with the Head of Year or Attendance Officer. An attendance target may be set at that time if you fail to attend. A Medical Absence Letter will be sent and all future absences will not be authorised by the Headteacher without medical evidence from a medical professional
- If your child has 8 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, A meeting under the Local Education Authority Fast Track Programme will be requested with parent/carers who have parental responsibility.

Home Visits/Child Protection

If a child has an extended period of absence and we are sufficiently concerned about their well-being we may:

1. Arrange to make a home visit – the pastoral team or other adult will undertake this.
2. Ask the local police to do a 'Safe and Well Check' if we are unable to see the child.
3. Ask Children's Services for their advice.
4. Inform the Left School No Trace Team if we think the child has been taken abroad or away without our knowledge (CME).

List of Attendance Codes

/ \	Present at registration
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils

Attendance versus Attainment

Attendance in school	Days missed	Approx. number of lessons missed
100%	0	0
95%	9	50
85%	28	150
75%	48	250

Number of days absent Year 11	5 or more GCSEs 9 - 5 achieved
Less than 7.5 days	89.5%
Between 12.5 and 15 days	46.9%
More than 20 days	28%

Legal Action Information for Parents

It is essential for children to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that children can reach their full potential. To achieve this, children need to attend school every day. We are sure that you would not want to jeopardise your child's academic progress by taking them away during term time.

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed and Headteachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in Term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

For example:

- Death of a parent/carer, or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

IF you have exceptional circumstances which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school. The Headteacher will then decide on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for the child to be absent during term time.

If a child is taken out of school without the Headteacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice has been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Ratified by Governors: 05/10/2022

Next Review Due: 05/10/2023

(This policy will remain in force beyond the review date if no updates are required)