Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School
Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF
www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk

Attendance Policy

Policy Start Date	Policy Review Date	Frequency
Spring 2025	**Spring 2027**	**Two Years**

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorised reason to be absent (registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence." A pupil's unauthorised absence is an offence for the **parent.**

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain maximum attendance for all children
- Maintain a low rate of persistent absenteeism
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of efficient and full time attendance
- Maintain good time keeping
- Help your child attain their full potential academically and socially

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life.

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school on each day the school is open for the pupils, unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence
- Phone in to the school with a reason for an absence on each day of absence before 8.30am.

Absence should only happen

- When your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom; 'feeling unwell' is not enough.
- We may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences before or after a school holiday.

- Let us know If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty
- If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know.
- A timely reason satisfactory to the school needs to be given for an absence; otherwise the absence will remain unauthorized
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Keeping the school updated by telephone, email or letter of any changes of circumstances. Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers and emergency contact details

- **If you are leaving** the area or changing schools, please complete a **Leaver's Form**. Schools and the local authority are obliged to track pupils missing from school. This can be intrusive in the absence of reliable or confirmed information.

School will:

- While we expect a parent to contact us with a reason for each absence, on occasion they might forget; we will call, text or otherwise contact parents. Schools have a safeguarding role so on occasion, home visits may be made by school staff or by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted.

- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality. The school will express '**a concern'** either verbally or by letter. If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence are unsatisfactory you will be invited to a meeting. The school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow and we will seek to support you. You may be asked to agree a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract'. A referral may also be made to the Borough's School Attendance Service.

- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings and in pupil's annual reports.

- Publish our attendance data on the school website via the newsletters

- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality

- If your child has a documented medical condition, we will discuss this with you. We will devise a care plan with you to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school nurse team.

- Where attendance concerns persist, the school will escalate the matter to the Borough Attendance Officer; this includes unauthorised absence due to significant lateness

Authorised Absence

- Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences." That

is when the school accept a reason given for absence.

- We realise that there are rare, unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent such as sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness or a family crisis. If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents, parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged parents must write to the Headteacher outlining reasons.

- Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence then the school will ask for evidence other than a parent's word in order to further allow authorisation.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)

Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem**.** The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action. Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to below 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a **Persistent Absentee.** Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement particularly at GCSE.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement plan with the school as a way of managing improvement.

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Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher's decision. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements (forms are available at the school office).

- If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.

- If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or within the UK, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates i.e. tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence extended their school place may be at risk

- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established he/she may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education'.

- Except as in the case of an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having being made. Satisfactory evidence of an emergency will need to be provide

Punctuality

Good punctuality is a pre-requisite to good learning and shows a respect between pupil, family and school.

- Late arrival after registration closes, without an acceptable reason can be marked as an 'unauthorised absence'. Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children

may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behavior. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.

- Morning registration is at 8.45 am. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gate by 8.30 am.

- Arrival after the close of registration (particularly if the lateness is frequent or persistent and there is not an acceptable reason) will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance; this has the value an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent we will want to discuss this with you.

- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

- Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about your plans; including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to school in writing. (A destination country or another named Local Authority without other details is not sufficient).

- When a child leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then he/she is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Hounslow Children's Integrated Response Service, the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Withdrawals:

- Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Home Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

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Legal Note

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine).

Headteacher:		**Date:**	**Spring 2025**
Chair of Governors		**Date:**	**Spring 2025**

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Appendix A

Exceptional Leave Request Form

Child's Name _____ Class_____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Has your child had a holiday/leave in the last or this academic year?
(If yes, please write the dates and days missed because of the holiday/leave.)

What is the date of your holiday/leave request? _____

How many days holiday/leave is your request for? _____

Why are you requesting a holiday/leave during the school term time? _____

_____
_
_____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date: _____

Please complete and return this form to the school office

To be completed by the school

Percentage attendance record for this year: _____
Percentage attendance record for last year:_____
How many days absent last year due to holiday/leave _____

Authorised by the Head Teacher - Yes/No

Signed _____