

St. LAURENCE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

***Through God's grace a community growing in knowledge and
understanding***

Ratified by Full Governing Body: 26th January 2017

Review Date: January 2020

Aims:

- To achieve a whole school attendance target of 96% or above
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the attendance of children and respond to concerns about levels of absence promptly
- To encourage parents not to take their children out of school during term time.

Purpose:

St Laurence wants each and every child to have the best possible attendance at school to enable them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Absence may also have an effect on friendships. At St Laurence School we work closely with families to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children.

Promoting Good Attendance:

Good attendance will be celebrated on a weekly basis. Classes will compete for the highest attendance and receive a visit from the attendance mascot as a prize. Every half term we will focus on attendance during the celebration assembly. Pupils that have improved their attendance will receive a certificate. At the end of the year, all children achieving good and those with improving attendance during the course of the year will be recognised and celebrated.

Monitoring Attendance:*The Three Letter System:*

Introduction: The three-letter system is intended to enable schools to continuously and consistently monitor and address poor school attendance. The system offers schools the opportunity to target non-attendance methodically and progressively up to and including the point at which a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be necessary. The system is based on three model letters which schools can send to parents when there are concerns about any emerging patterns of absenteeism. It is intended to apply to absence which is unauthorised and also to target patterns of absence which are authorised but which are beginning to cause concern.

Key Features and Potential Benefits:

- Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher can focus on the attendance of all pupils at least once a fortnight.
- Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher can quickly and easily identify those pupils whose attendance is becoming a cause of concern.
- In most cases Letter 1 brings about a rapid improvement in attendance and no further action is required.
- The system provides a clear record of the school's own efforts to improve attendance should it subsequently be necessary to involve the Education Welfare Service.
- As the Education Welfare Service 'Information about the EWS' leaflet has been shared with all parents and placed on the website, parents have been made aware of the existence and role of the Education Welfare Service prior to any subsequent involvement should this prove necessary.
 - The school can readily identify emerging attendance problems and therefore target support accordingly.
- The school builds up a consistent record of their own attendance interventions and is able to ensure that when they do need to involve the Education Welfare Service they do this only when their own efforts have proved unsuccessful.

The school produces a record of attendance every fortnight for all pupils and focusing on those whose attendance has fallen beneath 90%. These pupils are discussed fortnightly with the EWO, looking for emerging trends and patterns. Families are targeted by the Deputy Headteacher for support.

Letter 1: For those pupils who have been identified for the first time, a copy of Letter 1 (Appendix 1) is sent to the parents together with a copy of the Education Welfare Service 'Information about the EWS' leaflet. Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fail to be sustained, a further copy of Letter 1 may be sent at a later date.

Letter 2: Following the sending of Letter 1, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, a copy of Letter 2 is sent to parents (Appendix 2).

Letter 3: Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, then a copy of Letter 3 (Appendix 3) is sent to the parents (and copied to the Education Welfare Officer). The case is formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

At each stage of the system, letters acknowledging children's improved attendance will also routinely be sent.

Should the pupil have been absent for two continuous weeks without a satisfactory explanation having been received, or should there be child protection or other immediate welfare concerns then the school may of course make an earlier referral to the Education Welfare Officer. Should the child be on the Child Protection Register, the child's social worker should be notified immediately.

Leave of Absence during Term Time:

Whilst it is acknowledged that for some parents the issue of choosing when to arrange annual family holidays may be problematic due to particular working patterns and particular restrictions on when leave can be taken in some occupations, the vast majority of parents should be able to arrange for their annual family holiday to take place within the published dates for school holidays.

It is recognised that some parents may persist in taking their children out of school for the purposes of a family holiday regardless of the view and response of their child's school. A child does not have a 'right' or 'entitlement' to term-time leave for the purposes of an annual family holiday and that term-time leave, like all leave, can only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should understand that any request for leave of absence in term-time leave will be treated on an individual basis. Decisions to authorise absence will be based on individual family circumstances. The school will not, as a rule, agree to leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In all cases, absence will not be authorised unless the authorisation form has been completed and the Headteacher deems the circumstance to be exceptional. Exceptional circumstances will not include financial restraints and making use of holiday discounts.

Additional Guidance On Extended Visits Overseas:

We are aware in our school there are pupils whose families have work and family commitments abroad, the situation arises where visits are made overseas by these families for extended periods of more than two weeks. In making judgements about extended absence for such pupils, St Laurence will ensure that full account is taken not only of the regulations and the DfE guidance but

also of the situation of minority ethnic families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. This guidance is intended to assist schools in making such judgements.

Recognition of the Issues:

St Laurence recognises the particular circumstances of ethnic minority parents when considering the issue of extended visits overseas. We will take account of the following:-

- a visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance than the normal associations with 'holiday' which is a category recognised by the DfE
- visits may be very important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school - maintaining family links (in extended family situations) may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some societies
- it is often very difficult for ethnic minority parents to make visits for such normal activities as maintaining family contacts, visiting sick relatives, bereavements, etc where large distances and high costs are involved.

School Response

- St Laurence will make clear to parents the likely educational impact upon their children if extended leave is taken during term-time. The importance of being at school near and during SATs will also be stressed.
- Should the school feel unable to comply with the request for leave the reasons for this will be explained to the parents. This explanation should show an understanding of the parents' perspective.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Penalty Notices will only be issued in accordance with the terms within the Code of Conduct set out for Cambridgeshire. They will only be issued in relation to absence from school, which is unauthorised. At St Laurence, Penalty Notices will be issued to parents when their child's attendance falls below 85% over the previous 4-week period. Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will deploy other strategies to help the family improve attendance rates. Such strategies might include:

- writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities
- meeting with the child's parents;
- first day absence phone calls;
- setting targets for improvement;
- referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- involvement of other services/agencies i.e. Red Hen or the CB4 family worker

In the first instance, school would send a warning letter via the EWO (Appendix 4). If a family continue to take leave of absence without authorisation by the Headteacher, then a Penalty Notice Letter will be issued.

The fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. The fine rises to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren), which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months (per parent). The tariff for these fines is set by the Local Authority.

Policy Name: Attendance Policy

Policy Date: 26th January 2017**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT for SCHOOL POLICIES**

		Yes / No	Comments
1.	Does the Policy/Guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	• Age (for policies affecting staff)	N/A	
	• Disability	N	
	• Sex	N	
	• Gender reassignment	N	
	• Pregnancy/maternity	N	
	• Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)	N	
	• Sexual orientation	N	
	• Religion or belief	N	
	• Marriage / civil partnership	N	
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	Y	The school recognises the particular circumstances of ethnic minority parents when considering the issue of extended visits overseas.
3.	If we have identified potential discrimination are any exceptions reasonable, legal and justifiable?	Y	The school takes account of the significance of overseas visits to family for ethnic minority families, eg for children's identity & self esteem, maintaining family links, visiting sick relatives, bereavements etc.
4.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	N	
5.	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6.	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

Equality Impact Assessment carried out by: Full Governing Body

Date: 27th January 2017*Signed by Chair of Governors:*

MJ O'Sullivan

Appendix 1

St. Laurence Catholic Primary School

Arbury Road, Cambridge CB4 2JX

Telephone/Fax : 01223 712227

E-mail : office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Clare Clark LL.B (Hons), PGCE, NPQH



Date

Attendance Letter 1

Dear Parents,

As you know, we work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to review all of our pupils' school attendance. Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can impact on learning, and as you are aware, is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables pupils to keep up with the work required and meet their full potential. Absence may also have an effect on friendships.

I am writing to advise you that XXXXX's school attendance has fallen to XX. I have enclosed a copy of their attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The average attendance expected by our Education Welfare Officer is at least 96%. If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on XXXXX attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me so that we can work together and support you in improving your child's attendance.

A copy of the

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V Harvey

Deputy Headteacher Pastoral

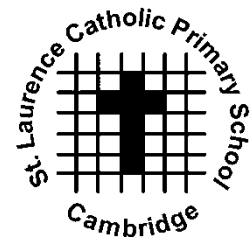
Appendix 2

St. Laurence Catholic Primary School

Arbury Road, Cambridge CB4 2JX

Telephone/Fax : 01223 712227

E-mail : office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk



Headteacher: Mrs. Clare Clark LL.B (Hons), PGCE, NPQH

Date

Attendance Letter 2

Dear Parent,

The Education Welfare Officer, Michelle McCormick, was in school this week to monitor our attendance records. We are concerned that XXXXX's attendance has continued to fall to 90%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

It is important that XXXXX maintains regular school attendance as any absence may interrupt their academic progress and may have an effect on maintaining classroom relationships. Regular attendance is a legal requirement and is monitored externally by our Education Welfare Officer.

In order to support you and improve your child's attendance, we would like to invite you to a meeting with myself and Mrs Clark. During this meeting we will discuss issues with attendance / lateness and ideas and strategies to work together for improvement. Please contact the school office to arrange a suitable time.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Harvey
Deputy Head Pastoral

Appendix 3

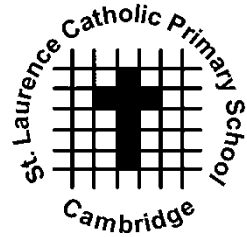
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E-mail : office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Clare Clark LL.B (Hons), PGCE, NPQH



Date

Attendance Letter 3

Dear Parents,

I note that there has been no significant improvement in XXXXX's attendance since <date>. XXXXX's attendance for this academic year has fallen to...%.

Disappointingly, I have not received a satisfactory explanation for XXXXX's absences. Therefore it has now become necessary to refer XXXXX and the concerns around their attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

Michelle McCormick, our Education Welfare Officer, will contact you in due course. Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available as we want to work in partnership with you to improve your child's attendance. Please contact me on the above number should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Clark
Headteacher

Appendix 4



My ref:
Your ref:
Date:
Contact: Michelle McCormick
Direct dial: 01223729073
E Mail:

Children, Families and Adult Services
Executive Director: Adrian Loades
Education Welfare Officer
North Locality Team
Res1402
Babbage House,
Castle Hill
Cambridge
CB3 0AT
Tel: 01223 728580

Mr and Mrs XXXXXX
????
????
Cambridge

Dear Mr and Mrs XXXXXX,

Re: xxxxxxxx dob: xxxxxxxx School: St Laurence Catholic Primary

As the Education Welfare Officer for St Laurence Catholic Primary, it has been brought to my attention that XXXXXX has been absent from school for ? sessions out of a possible ? sessions over the period of xx to xx.

A copy of the Record of Attendance is enclosed for your information. As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

Failure to do so could result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered. As your child's attendance has been irregular over this period, I am therefore serving you with a Formal Warning. Should the attendance not improve (**and / or there are further episodes of unauthorised absence**), you may be issued with a Penalty Notice and/or face prosecution in the Magistrates courts.

If you wish to discuss this matter in more detail, or require support or advice, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Michelle McCormick
Education Welfare Officer
Enc. Record of Attendance
School Attendance Leaflet