

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School *Attendance Policy*

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 and 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 and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Regular attendance at Our Lady Immaculate Primary School is considered to be 97%

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 Excellent Attendance and Punctuality:

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you data on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance and punctuality through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

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 cause.

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 never better 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 is doing great harm and we need parent's fullest support to address this.

We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level or at danger 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 us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by either telephoning the school office or using the reporting form on the school app;

- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;

If your child is absent we will:

- Send you a Groupcall text to advise you that your child is not in school and we have not been given a reason why. If we do not receive contact from you by 10.30am on the same day we will telephone you or any persons on your contact list.
- If contact with you is not established on the first morning of absence, we may follow this up with a home welfare visit from either school staff or the education welfare officer.
- If we have still failed to make contact a home welfare visit may be made by Merseyside police in order to ensure the safety of you and your child ;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

If your child's poor attendance record continues you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Governors Panel to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school

Medical Evidence:

Though we always ask you for a note when your child has been absent, we may need more evidence, particularly if there are repeat absences for medical reasons.

We will accept the following as medical evidence:

Doctor's certificate – Optional

Appointment card- Date stamped

Medication in the name of the child

Prescription

Text message from doctors or NHS confirming an appointment

Care of the chemist –date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

Appointment letters from hospital, doctor or dentist

This is not an exhaustive list

In some cases too we may need to ask you about getting School Health involved in talking to you and or your Doctor if there are particular concerns about health-related absences.

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.

Parents can also update their contact information regularly by using our school app, which if

free to download from the App Store. (search for Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School)

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 from the Local Authority. 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 school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PAEWO 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

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. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and 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.
- Registers are marked by 9.00am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- At 9.30 am the registers will be closed – in accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site, *but this will not count as a present mark* in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means that you may face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- In the afternoon your child must be in school for 1.00 pm for KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2 pupils. *Children who arrive in school during the lunch break having been absent during the morning will not be accepted onto the playground or in the canteen.*
- The registers will be closed again at 1.30pm (KS1) and 2.00pm (KS2) and again arrival after this time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

Approved at the full governing body meeting on 13th July 2017
Review Date: Summer 2019

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Governors panel to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

We do not authorise holidays in term time and penalty notices will be issued

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

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

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

All applications for leave for other exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and 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.*

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.

School targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

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

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and 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 and 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. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mrs Sergeant, our headteacher, who decides on the classification of absences and puts cases forward for prosecution or Penalty Notices.
- All Class teachers, who monitor their pupil's attendance and set the weekly attendance targets for their classes. Pupil's achieving 100% attendance each week receive a certificate and are entered into a draw for a gift voucher for £5.
- Mrs Finnegan and Mr Southworth our learning mentors, who monitor school attendance and make referrals to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Administration staff who make first day absence text messages and telephone calls.

Stepped interventions

OLI Attendance Stepped Interventions		
97%-95%	Early warning	Early warning letters , phone calls home , linking with class teachers
95%-90%	Learning mentor/school monitoring	Letters to targeted families 1-1 meetings Home visits
95%-93%	Governors attendance panel	If attendance continue to decline
93%-91%	EWO intervention stage 1	Fixed penalty Warning letter – child must have 20 days full attendance. This can be extended if required
90% and below	EWO intervention stage 2	Parent surgeries Home visits Fines and prosecutions

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school's bi-annual review programme.

Date for review: Summer Term 2019