

# Childwall Abbey School

# Attendance Policy



*"A calm, safe and welcoming place in which to work and learn.*

*A place where everyone supports each other to achieve.*

*A place we enjoy coming to each day."*

Date:	September 2019
To be reviewed:	2020

### **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 that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

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 and 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 Regular Attendance:**

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 details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you 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 through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), 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 makes things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing great harm and we need parents' 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;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- Or, you can speak with any member of staff that you see on the playground.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you after three days absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher and/or Governors if absence persists;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer.

### **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. Please 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.

### **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 Pupil Attendance & 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 unauthorized 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 EWO 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 3901

### **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 it can be embarrassing for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in at that time. Registers are marked by **9.15am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At **9:30am** 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 1.30pm. 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.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Governors 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:**

#### **Permission for holidays in term time will not be granted.**

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, a fine or court.

#### **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. The attendance target for secondary schools in Liverpool is currently **97%**, however, we understand that our children have both emotional and medical difficulties and this can sometimes prevent them, on occasions, from attending school. With this in mind we are happy to set our school target slightly lower and expect ALL of our children to achieve **94%** or above. We are aiming for this level because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling and we believe our pupils are amongst the best 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 newsletters and we ask for your full support. Attendance records are kept in Spectrum Files by pupils and reviewed at Pastoral time each week.

#### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

- The Headteacher, who decides on the classification of absences and puts cases forward for prosecution or Penalty Notices.
- The Attendance Lead who liaises with the EWO.
- Mentor who supports the Attendance Lead
- School Office, who monitor school attendance and make first day absence telephone calls and refer on to the Attendance Lead.

#### **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 child attends school. Staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

#### **Supporting pupils on the autism spectrum.**

We use a range of multi-sensory teaching and learning styles. We use a number of common fundamental principles that make for successful teaching of pupils on the autism spectrum.

These include:

- Intensive, structured and purposeful teaching.
- Clear, unambiguous and explicit instructions and teaching strategies.
- Use of repetition to consolidate.
- Re-teaching in different contexts and in different ways, not assuming that the pupil has understood because they have repeated or demonstrated something.
- Using a communicative form that the pupil understands and can use to convey ideas to others i.e.: visual, audio or kinaesthetic learning, giving students the opportunity for learning to be achieved through experience of the world.
- Giving opportunities for learning with a personal meaning that is interesting and motivating.
- A high level of adult support and tuition.

This policy has been approved by the Educational Welfare Department Liverpool City Council.