# The Rosary Catholic Primary School

**Telephone No 0121 464 4519**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



October 2023

**Based on the values and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

**2024 - 2025**

“Jesus Christ, son of Mary, Son of God, is the centre of the Rosary community where we live, love and learn together”

Attendance Policy

**What can we say the kingdom of God is like? It is like a mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing in the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown, it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.”**

***Gospel of Mark 4:30-32***

As members of the Rosary Catholic School we are in a privileged and unique position to live out the Gospel values and nurture the children who attend our school to understand and live out their own vocation and achieve their potential. Through our teaching and guidance we encourage them every day to attend school and be punctual so that they can develop their gifts to their full potential and prepare them to be the contributing citizens of the future. It is our mission that each child can achieve their potential as a unique child of God in a safe and secure environment based on mutual respect.

**RRSA**

This policy supports Article 28 of the UNCRC with children having the right to go to school and learn. It also supports Article 29 which states that children have the right to be the best that they can be**.**

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**1.Introduction**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Rosary Catholic Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning .Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

**2.Aims**

Through this Policy we aim to:

•Maximise pupils’ achievement by ensuring the highest levels of attendance and punctuality.

•Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

•Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised and valued by all members of the school community.

•Raise awareness with parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.

•Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

•Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the LA so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

•Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

•Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

•Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

•Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues.

•Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.

•Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child’s age and development.

•Maintaining effective means of communication on school attendance matters.

•Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.

•Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.

•Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

**3.Definitions**

**Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

 **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

**4.Procedures**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

•To maintain appropriate registration processes.

•To maintain appropriate attendance data.

•To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations.

•To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.

•To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.

•To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.

•To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality through Early Help support.

•To make referrals using the Fast Track process for any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.

•To report attendance statistics to SLT and Governors

•All staff will raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Pastoral Manager who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

**5.Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

 **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

•Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers

•Informing the Pastoral Manger where there are concerns

•Providing background information to support referrals

•Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns

•Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness

•Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register

•Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

**Pastoral Manager**

•Collating and recording registration and attendance information.

•Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence

•Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed

•Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.

•Recording details of children who arrive late or go home

•Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher

•Sending out standard letters regarding attendance monthly

•Completing referrals to relevant agencies including MIE and the Legal Team

**Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

•Overall monitoring of school attendance

•Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence

•Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues

•Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised

•Providing reports to Governors

•Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

 **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

•Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.

•Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.

•Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)

•Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.

•Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child’s reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

**6.Registration**

Breakfast club will be available for pupils from 8.15am. All the school doors open at 8.20 am until 8.45 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 and by 1.30pm.

**7.Lateness**

Once the doors are closed at 8.45am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.45am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late. Children who have attended a dentist or doctor’s appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence.

 Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

 Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

 8.**Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child’s absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child’s absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child’s absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

**9.First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Pastoral Manager checks all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child’s absence. If unable to contact parent/carer we will make a visit to the home address. If we are still unable to determine where the child is or the reason for the absence we will make contact with other family members and may also contact the police to conduct a safe and well check. The safety of the children is of paramount importance and as a school we take safeguarding very seriously and will take the necessary steps to ensure we know where the child is.

 **10.Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor’s note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

**11.Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

**From 1st September 2013,** amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** made clear that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. From 1st September 2016, further amendments were made to the Regulations relating to removal from roll. Absence from school interrupts teaching and learning and compromises progress. The Rosary School follows the directive of Birmingham City Council and strongly discourages pupil leave of absence during term time. The expectation is that such leave would only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances.

Parents have the right to request permission to take their children out of school during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. They must complete an application form which should be submitted to the school at least two weeks before they are due to leave. Parents must contact the school and allow the school to consider their application before booking flights or leaving the country, even when unforeseen events occur (e.g. family bereavement).

On rare occasions, a judgement may be made that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term. **A** **blanket ban on all term time leave does not operate at The Rosary School and each application is considered on its own merits.**

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

\*death of 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)

\*leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time

\*leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)

Family emergencies are always carefully considered as it may not always be in the best interests of the pupil nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. School and school relationships can provide pupils with stability and care during difficult times.

If leave is granted, the Head Teacher determines the number of school days a child can be away from school

**12.Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

 It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child’s attendance record does not improve over a period of time, parents / carers will be invited to a meeting with the Pastoral Manager with the aim of overcoming the barriers preventing children from attending school. Where attendance does not improve parents will attend a meeting with a member of the SLT and an Early Help plan created. Where attendance does not improve then the school has a responsibility to make a referral using the Fast Track system which can result in penalty notices being issued.

**13.Monitoring Attendance**

The Pastoral Manager has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Letters will be sent to parents from the end of September for those pupils with attendance below 90%. If attendance continues to decline, parents / carers will be invited to a meeting with the Pastoral Manager to discuss specific barriers impacting on attendance. Where attendance does not improve parents will attend a meeting with a member of the SLT and an Early Help plan created in order to promote good behaviours of punctuality and attendance. It is only after all support systems have been exhausted that school will pursue legal lines of enquiry.

As part of our monitoring processes we look at attendance data taking into consideration percentage and reasons.

For those children with attendance between 86% - 90% a letter will be sent to parents to make them aware that attendance is an issue. Parents will be given 4 weeks to improve attendance to above 90%; this will be monitored by the attendance team.

For children with attendance between 81% - 85%, the pastoral team will monitor every 3 weeks. This will allow parents a period of time to improve attendance, once above 86%, monitoring will be extended to 4 weeks.

For children with attendance between 76% - 80%, the pastoral team will be monitoring every 2 weeks and will be tracking improvements over the 2 week period.

For children with attendance below 75%, the pastoral team will monitor weekly.

**Please remember, we are all in this together. For further information please use the links below.**

* Attendance queries (ELIT) - attendance@birmingham.gov.uk
* Working together to improve attendance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
* Deletion from Roll - <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance>
* Children Missing from Education (CME) Team - cme@birmingham.gov.uk
* Elective Home Education (EHE) Team - [Home.Education@birmingham.gov.uk](http://Home.Education@birmingham.gov.uk)
* EHE Guidance for Parents - <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/home-education>