



# The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



## Attendance Policy

|               |           |                                                                                     |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scope:        |           | Federation                                                                          |
| Date Adopted: |           | Autumn 23                                                                           |
| This Review:  |           | NA                                                                                  |
| Next Review:  |           | Autumn 26                                                                           |
| Approved      | EHT:      |  |
|               | Governor: | T Tampin                                                                            |
|               |           | Full Policy: Every 3 Years<br>Procedure: Annual                                     |
|               |           | Monitoring & Evaluation Committee                                                   |



# The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



**'With God all things are possible'**

**'Where there is love, there is God'**

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will give every child the best possible education because each individual is uniquely created and precious to God. As a Catholic community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will follow the example of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life.

With the help of God's love, the Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will seek to develop the whole child. Each child is uniquely created and precious to God and it is the Federation's mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, to nurture each child's spiritual, moral and academic growth.

## **Inspired by the teachings of Christ we will...**

- Develop our children's faith, spirituality and joy in the love of God.
- Educate our children to the highest standards thus realising their own potential. Instil in our children the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed and take pride in their achievements recognising we each have special gifts and talents.
- Encourage everyone to be more than they thought possible, in a secure and loving environment.
- Promote a caring community where we will all behave well. We will be dignified in our actions, demonstrating good manners, tolerance, kindness and generosity to ourselves and others.
- Prepare our children today to become tomorrow's responsible and independent individuals equipped to face life's challenges.
- Ensure our Federation is a happy, safe and welcoming place where we all enjoy learning, work hard, support one another and do our best.
- Create an active partnership of love, joy and high expectations between children, parents, carers, staff, governors, parishes and the wider community.

## **Inclusion statement**

The school community will ensure that ALL children irrespective of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including those who identify as transgender), sexual orientation, ability, special educational need, disability, faith or religion, age, culture, socio-economic or home background will have equal access to the breadth of this policy.

The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and the school will endeavour to promote their individuality. Children with learning disabilities and gifted and talented children will be allowed to express themselves according to their ability. Work will be differentiated to meet their needs and achievements will be celebrated.

This Policy will be implemented through on going consultation with all members of the school community and developments in law or statutory guidance.

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## Aims

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## Roles and responsibilities

### The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Federation's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention and reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.

## **Class teachers**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am for morning registration and 1.30pm for afternoon registration.

## **School Admin staff**

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Support school staff in monitoring, obtaining and recording reasons for absence.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Providing attendance reports to school staff to use at parents consultation meetings and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## Recording attendance

### Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made.
  - The name and position of the person who made the amendment.
- See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken from 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm

### Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- The Headteacher or other senior leader will meet with the parents of pupils who are persistently late for school to identify any barriers to arriving at school on time and offer strategies to support improving punctuality.

## **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home-visit to determine the reason for the absence.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and / or children's services.

## **Reporting to parents/carers**

- The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels on a termly basis via the parent consultation meetings and the summer report.

## **Approval for term-time absence**

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

## Legal sanctions

- The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
- The school will endeavour to find alternative ways to work with pupils and families which improve attendance and avoids the need to move to legal sanctions.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

- Each week there is a celebration of attendance and the classes with the highest percentage will be published in our school newsletter.
- At the end of the academic year, pupils with 100% attendance will receive a special certificate in recognition of their perfect attendance record.
- An Attendance display board is updated weekly to enable the whole school community to celebrate each class's success.
- Each half term classes who regularly achieve above 97% are rewarded with additional playtime/ a games session of their choice.

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

- Class teachers and teaching assistants are best placed to raise attendance concerns in the first instance. Where they identify patterns of attendance developing or a decline in pupil attendance, the class teacher and teaching assistant will discuss the attendance concerns with the parent or carer. If there is no improvement, they will discuss their concerns with a member of the leadership team, usually a DHT.
- Admin staff may also identify patterns in attendance, such as joint sibling absence or other patterns of poor school attendance. Where this occurs, admin staff will notify the class teacher and a member of the leadership team. If appropriate, the member of admin staff will challenge poor attendance with the parents or carers.
- Parents are required to inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of absence and on any subsequent days beyond the child's anticipated return date. Where appropriate, admin staff may challenge reasons for absence if the reason provided would not normally require time off school. Admin staff may seek support in this from the class teacher or members of the leadership team, should they require it.
- Where a parent or carer does not contact the school on the first day of absence, the class teaching assistant or, if appropriate, class teacher, should call to ascertain the reason for absence. If the parent does not respond, a message should be left where possible, and admin staff continue to seek the reason for absence. Staff speaking with the child's parents or carers should also obtain an anticipated return date. Where a child does not return on the anticipated return date, parents and carers should be contacted again, in the first instance by the class teacher or teaching assistant.
- Admin staff should provide to the Headteacher (or Deputy) a daily report about any unexplained absence. The Headteacher will decide on the necessary steps to take which may include the provision of support, liaising with social care or carrying out a home visit.
- Where patterns of poor attendance have been established, parents will receive notification in writing. Whole-school attendance is reviewed for this purpose once per half term and letters are issued, where required.

- Where the attendance patterns do not show signs of improvement, parents and carers will be required to attend an attendance meeting in school. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the barriers to positive school and attendance and look at strategies to remove barriers which will be agreed by all parties. A review meeting is usually scheduled up to half a term later.
- Where this is unsuccessful, parents or carers decline to engage or the absence is serious or chronic, the school will utilise the support of the local authority attendance service.

## **Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly at a whole-school level and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Share school attendance data with other legitimately interested stakeholders, for example, the local authority and the DfE. Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

## **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly, including through the Head Teacher's report to governors, to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

## **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

## **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to the Pastoral Support Team to support parents identifying potential barriers to attendance.
- Create attendance contracts with parents and carers to identify any barriers to attendance and create targets for improvement.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Medical Conditions at School Policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition                    | Scenario                                                                        |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| /    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration                                        |
| \    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| B    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement                                         |

| Code                      | Definition                  | Scenario                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |                                                                            |
| C                         | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E                         | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| H                         | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| I                         | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |

|                             |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed                                                                                                                                                 |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>                                                                                                        |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend                                                           |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school                                                                |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day                                                |