

# St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School

## Attendance Policy



September 2024

### **Mission Statement:**

St. Kentigern's School is part of our parish community of faith, which helps our children to develop their spiritual, mental and physical abilities to their highest possible potential, by prayerfully basing their lives on the teachings and values of Jesus Christ and his Church, while recognising and respecting the beliefs of others. We are committed to the development of the whole child within a community where every individual is valued and respected.

Co-operation and friendship will encourage a happy and caring, learning environment. The aims of St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School are:

- To help children develop lively, enquiring and creative minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and the development of physical skills.
- To provide a warm, caring environment in which pupils may live and learn.
- To help pupils to acquire knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes relevant to life in an everchanging world.
- To in still respect for Catholic religious moral values and tolerance of other races, religions and cultures.
- To share the gospel values to enable pupils to understand the world in which they live and the independence of individuals, groups and nations.
- To help pupils to appreciate human achievements and aspirations.
- To provide a positive learning environment in which individual achievements are recognised and valued.

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## Statement of Intent

St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils can't achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to: • Following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

*'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.*

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies within the Disability Discrimination Act (2010)
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

### 1. Key roles and responsibilities

#### Key staff:

Mrs Christine Murray	Headteacher and Attendance Champion
Mrs Sandra Sobrino	Business manager – responsible for registers
Mrs Simone Bond	Pastoral Lead and Attendance
Mr Gareth Moyle	Pupil Welfare Officer

1.1. The Governors has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School.

1.2. The Governors has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

1.3. The Governors has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

1.4. The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School.

1.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

1.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

1.7. Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.

1.8. Parents and carers will be expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that pupils attend school every day.

1.9. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

## 2. Definitions

2.1. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed at 8.55am. If arriving before 9.30am this will be classed as a late mark.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School defines an "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave on production of appropriate appointment cards/letter.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school have granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency or exceptional circumstances.

2.3. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Leaving school without valid reason during the day.

2.4. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as: • Missing 10 per cent (10%) or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason.**

### **3. Training of staff**

- 3.1. At St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils (KCSIE) and policy shared at the start of each academic year.
- 3.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on the attendance policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 3.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

### **4. Pupil expectations**

- 4.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year.

### **5. Promoting Regular Attendance**

5.1. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupil and all members of staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- 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.

### **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- 6.2. Parents/carers must send a note in on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation of why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. The PWO will be contacted if school cannot make contact.

6.5. For children at risk of falling into persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer or headteacher.

6.6. If a pupil absence drops below 90 per cent (90%), the Pupil Welfare Officer will be informed.

## **7. Contact information**

7.1. Parents/carers must provide accurate and up to date contact details.

7.2. Parents/carers are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

7.3. Two emergency contact details must be provided.

## **8. Pupil Welfare Officer**

8.1. If pupils are at risk of persistent absence or falling below expected levels of punctuality or attendance, pupils' parents will be contacted by the local authority Pupil Welfare Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement and in liaison with school.

8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken.

8.3. If you are having any problems getting your child to school or issues with punctuality you can approach school at any time to discuss.

## **9. Lateness**

9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

9.2. The school opens at 8:40am and pupils should be in their classrooms by 8:55am.

9.3. Registers are marked by 8:55am and pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

9.4. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

## **10. Requests for Leave during Term Time**

10.1. At St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

10.2. In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulations 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

10.4. Leave during term time will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances.

### **Penalty Fines**

The Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

## **11. Monitoring**

11.1. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School monitors attendance and punctuality on a fortnightly schedule.

11.2. Absence patterns e.g. Number of broken weeks, number of missed sessions are monitored alongside the percentage of absence and attendance and punctuality.

11.3. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School's attendance target is 96 per cent (96%).

## **12. Religious Observances**

12.1. The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year.

12.2. Parents must request in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **13. Appointments**

13.1. As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

13.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to school.

13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they must be signed out by a parent/carer.

13.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.



## **14. Young Carers**

14.1. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School understands the difficulties that face young carers.

14.2. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

14.3. St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **15. Children picked up late after school**

15.1. Such incidents can cause distress to children who are keen to see their parents/carers at the end of the school day and such should be avoided at all costs.

15.2. Parents/carers must telephone the school office if they are running late to advise on the time of their arrival in school. On arrival, the school may ask parents/carers to provide written information detailing the reason for late collection.

## **16. Children not picked up after school**

16.1. The school will make all reasonable effort to contact parents/carers who fail to collect their child after school. From 4:00pm the school will contact the Pupil Welfare Service who will temporarily take over care of the child.

## **17. Equal opportunities**

For children to have equal opportunity to succeed at school, they must have equal access to the curriculum. Unless they are at school they cannot hope to achieve this access, so attendance and punctuality is at the heart of equal opportunity.

St. Kentigern's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing all children with a suitable and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued, and encouraged to respect themselves and others. Our expectation is that all our pupils attend school every day and on time, unless they are too unwell or there are exceptional circumstances.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance monitoring procedures.

- A RAG rated spread sheet will be sent fortnightly to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Attendance Champion (AC) detailing annual attendance to date.
- Attendance will be discussed by classroom teachers (CT) Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by CT should be passed immediately to the SLT.
- Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any student absence not reported. Second day N codes will be sent to the SLT daily by the AC. The AC should contact home by telephone. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised 3 absence.
- Pupil Attendance drops below 90% - AC will speak to pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how school can help to improve their attendance. AC will make a phone call home if applicable.
- Pupil Attendance drops below 90% - A letter will be sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school target of 96%. The letter will also have attached a leaflet outlining how parents can work with school and their child to help improve attendance.
- Pupil Attendance drops below 85% - A letter will be sent home explaining that a pupil's absence is now being monitored. AC will contact parents. Attendance monitored for 2 weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with their child's CT. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) who will then carry out a home visit.
- If attendance has not improved within the 2 week monitoring period (likely to be close to 80% or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: A school attendance meeting with AC and member of the SLT if appropriate or a medical action planning meeting with the School Nurse, CT, AC and SENCO. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two week period.
- After the two week monitoring period, if targets are met a letter will be sent home from the leadership team to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises - If targets are not met, the HOY will make a referral to the PWO.
- Education Welfare protocol will be followed. A parental contract will be drawn up and followed. 4 week monitoring period. No improvements – final written warning. Further 4 weeks – no improvement – fixed penalty notice issued.

## Appendix 2 – Attendance reporting structure

- Classroom Teacher
- Attendance Champion
- Senior Leadership Team
- Pupil Welfare Office