



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **‘Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God...’ Matthew 6.33**

#### **Statement of Intent**

St Patricks Catholic College is committed to providing a full and effective education for all pupils and to ensuring that all pupils reach their potential.

We recognise that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit fully from their education. No matter how good the teaching, children cannot learn if they are absent. Those who frequently have time away from school risk their entire future prospects and are likely to become increasingly disaffected and alienated from both their peers and the world of work. The longer-term implications of underachievement through absence are incalculable.

Good attendance also plays an important role in ensuring that our children are safe.

St Patrick’s Catholic College expects a minimum attendance target of 95% over the school year. A pupil who is absent from school for nine days or less will achieve this target and give themselves the best possible chance of achieving their potential.

The Government expects:

- **Schools and local authorities** to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence:
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled: and,
  - Act early to address patterns of absence
  
- **Parents** to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
  
- All **pupils** to be punctual to their lessons.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1)(3)(4) &(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013;

**Registration is a legal requirement by government. Registration is recorded in the first instance by the form tutor. All staff teaching lessons throughout the day will record a class register for each of the lessons they teach.**

**P.M. registrations will take place within Period 4 at 13:20. Any pupil absence that was not recorded during the a.m. session will be reported to Gill Evans (Attendance Officer). This absence will be reported to parents by 14:00.**

**The College is aware that when records are kept on a computer there must be a print-out at least once per month, and that at the end of the year the print-outs must be bound into annual volumes.**

In the event of a technical fault in collecting register information, a paper copy of a.m. or p.m. registers should be collected and sent to Gill Evans as soon as possible.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### **Categorisation of Absence**

*Authorised absences* are mornings or afternoons away from the College for a satisfactory reason. Absences will usually be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where the College is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend.
- Where the pupil has an urgent medical appointment.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for absence which is beyond the family's control.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/pupils' parent belong.
- Other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement).
- Leave of absence has been granted for an exceptional circumstance (see section on leave of absence during term time.)
- A pupil participating in an approved non educational activity.

*Unauthorised absences* are those that the College do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence on the part of the parent and/or carer and include:

- Where no explanation has been given by the parent.
- Where the College is not satisfied with the parental explanation.
- The student is on a family holiday without leave of absence being given.
- Staying at home to mind the house or a younger sibling.
- A shopping trip.
- An unexceptional reason e.g., a pupil's birthday.
- The decision whether to authorise or not authorise absence will always rest with the College.

### **First Day Absence**

If a pupil is going to be absent on a particular day we ask parents to phone the school before 8.30am on the morning of the absence and explain the reason behind the absence. It is important that you provide as much information as possible within the message, stating that your child "is ill" will not suffice. If a pupil is not in the College and no reason has been given by the parent, the Attendance Officer will make contact with the parent as part of "First Day Calling" this is to ask for the reasons as to why the child is not in school but is primarily so that we can account for the student and be sure that they are safe. To ensure that "First Day Calling" is as effective as possible, parents and/or carers should ensure that the College have up to date and appropriate contact details. Parents are also asked to send in a note with their child on their return to school.

If the parent and/or carer knows in advance that a pupil is not going to be in the College, e.g. due to a medical appointment which cannot be arranged out of school time, they should inform the College of this prior to the event by a note being sent in via their child and handed into their tutor or Attendance Officer.

### **Third Day Absence**

If the child is still absent on the third day and there has been no contact from parents, the attendance officer will complete a home-visit to ascertain the safety and welfare of the child. Concerns will be reported to the Assistant Head Teacher in charge of Pastoral Care and Guidance.

### **Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging**

1. The Attendance Officer in the college will investigate.
2. The parent/carer is invited to attend a school meeting to work with the Head of Year and Attendance Officer to help resolve the difficulties, offering support from the College or other outside agencies.
3. Where intervention is not successful, parents and pupils may be invited to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting (Attendance Officer, Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral Care and Guidance, LA Attendance Officer)

4. The Attendance Officer will consider a referral for a FPN (Fixed Penalty Fine) in some cases of unauthorised absence in accordance with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
5. When other strategies have failed to have an effect, information will be referred to Stockton Local Authority Exclusion and Attendance team who will consider prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 at Magistrates Court.

### **Holiday absence**

**We do not permit absence for holiday periods during term time** as stated in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. However, it is within the Head teacher's power to grant and authorise leave for exceptional circumstances.

Please note the following if a parent wishes to take their child out of the college during term time:

- Parents should fill in a holiday form. As much notice as possible should be given. Forms are available from the attendance officer.
- The college will consider this request.
- The parent will be informed verbally or in writing whether or not the leave of absence has been granted.
- Reasons will be given if leave of absence is not granted. If the request is granted the absence from the college will be authorised. (This will only be in exceptional circumstances.)
- If the leave of absence is not granted and the parent still takes their child out of school, the absence will not be authorised and the College may refer the matter to the local authority. In such cases a **penalty notice** may be issued by the local authority. This may involve a **fine** being issued.
- Failure to pay any such fine could lead to prosecution in a **Magistrates Court**.
- If a parent removes their child without requesting leave of absence, the Academy may have to apply to the local authority for a penalty notice to be issued.

Holidays taken in term time are not generally considered to be exceptional circumstances and will not usually be authorised.

### **Post Registration Truancy**

Pupils who leave the college without permission after the register has been taken are putting themselves at great risk. Any member of staff who witnesses a pupil leaving the college in this way or who is suspicious about why a pupil is not in their lesson, should contact the Attendance Officer immediately. She will contact the parents of the pupil as soon as she is aware a pupil has left the college site without permission.

## **Punctuality**

The College puts high expectations on its pupils in terms of punctuality as a way of best preparing them for the world of work. Pupils are expected to be in their tutor room/tutor line by 8.40am. Pupils who arrive in the College after 8.40am should enter by the main entrance and will have their name taken by the PAT team or the Attendance Officer. They will be registered as late. If arriving after 9.15am they should sign in at reception but then go straight to Period 1. In the interests of safety it is essential that this procedure is followed. Pupils who are frequently late can expect:

- To be punished in the form of detentions – break time and lunch time on the day.
- Letters to be sent to parents.
- Parents to be invited into school for meetings if no improvement is made.

Education is important. Missing sessions or being consistently late means that students are missing out on valuable teaching. Any pupil arriving after 9.15 am will be given an unauthorised absence (Code U). Allowing absence from school without a good reason is an offence by law on the part of the parent and/or carer that can result in legal action being taken.

## **Rewards**

We believe in rewarding students who have an excellent attendance record. Examples of some of the rewards we give are;

- Certificates for pupils who have 100% attendance for a term.
- Certificates for pupils with 100% attendance for the school year.
- Prizes for Tutor Groups with the best attendance each week. Each tutor group is given monopoly money each week: 95%=£1; 97%=£5 and 100%=£10. This is saved up over the year and the form choose their reward at the end of the year based on the money they have collected.

## **Support**

Every child is sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular attendance within the College difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out between staff, parents and pupils at an early stage. If a pupil 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 it will make things worse. At St Patrick's Catholic College we have an excellent pastoral system which will work with pupils and families to break down barriers to attendance.

## **Who is responsible?**

Ultimately parents and/or carers are responsible for ensuring attendance in the college with parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age having a legal duty to ensure that

their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at St Patrick's or otherwise. However, the college appreciates that good working relationships between the staff, pupil and the parent and/or carers will undoubtedly have more successful outcomes. Please see below for the structure of responsibility within the College relating to attendance.

Overall responsibility to ensure that staff are in place and are fulfilling the policy lies with the Head teacher, Mrs C Humble. The HT has delegated responsibility for attendance and punctuality to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Pastoral Care and Guidance, Mrs M Booth.

Working alongside Mrs Booth on this issue are the Attendance Officer, Mrs G Evans – responsible for the day-to-day overview of attendance in the school. Mrs Evans makes home visits and deals with the wider attendance services where the college has concerns regarding a child's attendance.

For academic year 2017-18, Mrs Booth will be on maternity leave and in her place, the school has appointed an Attendance & Exclusions Manager to deal lead the area. Mrs Anne-Marie Cartwright fulfils this role 2 days/ week to ensure cover.

The Learning Leaders for each year group also have an important role to play in supporting the improvement of pupil attendance in their year groups - Mrs K Leach, Mr L Larkin, Miss J Harris, Miss F Crisp and Miss G Morgan. As part of the PP strategy, Learning Leaders will meet with the concerns in their Year groups regarding attendance.

The Pastoral Administration Team, Mrs J Gallagher and Mrs A Fisk will support with the punctuality detentions by ensuring that the pupils that are late are noted and informed where they are to go for their detentions on that day.

Written by M Booth

26/06/17

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually at the start of the autumn term by the School Improvement Committee, on behalf of the full Local Management Board.

Reviewed & amended: **June 2017**

To be 'Approved by Governors': **July 2017**

Review Date: **September 2019** (or sooner if necessary)

Further reviewed in light of amendments in school procedures: **November 2017**

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher: