

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This is a successful school and your child plays his/her part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school or alternative provision on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends school, alternative provision or otherwise 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 so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school, alternative provision or otherwise is your legal responsibility and permitting absence 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/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- ❖ Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what his/her attendance and punctuality rate is as this relates to his/her progress;
- ❖ celebrate good attendance by reporting individual and class achievements;
- ❖ reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), 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 good reasons like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- ❖ Parents/carers keeping children off school or alternative provision 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 in line with government guidelines.

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school or alternative provision. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up her absence or to give in to pressure to excuse his/her from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If your child is absent you must:

- ❖ Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, where possible this should be before 8.30 am;
- ❖ send a note in on the first day he/she returns with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- ❖ or, you can call into school and report to the visitors reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you;
- ❖ or, you can email school ao@notredame.liverpool.sch.uk

If your child is absent we will:

- ❖ Telephone or text message you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- ❖ invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- ❖ refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below an acceptable standard;
- ❖ make a referral to the Community Police Officer for enrolment on the AAA programme. A programme designed to monitor children who are persistently absent and/or late and whose parents are in danger of legal proceedings.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help

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us to help you and your son/daughter by making sure we always have an up to date telephone number and an email address – 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/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance 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 (PAEWO) from the Local Authority. 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 unauthorised 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 Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PAEWO 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.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day he/she can miss work and does not spend time with his/her class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, lateness can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. All pupils should be punctual to all lessons.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your son/daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your son/daughter will receive a late mark if he/she is not in by that time.

At **9.35am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your son/daughter arrives after that time he/she will receive a mark that shows him/her to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean he/she has an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Any pupil who arrives late to school will be given an after school detention. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach

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us at any time if you are having problems getting your son/daughter to school on time.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Headteacher is unable to authorise any absence for holidays in term time.

Any period of leave taken for holidays during term time, will be classed as unauthorised and **will** attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The school has targets to improve attendance and your son/daughter has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for individual classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for the school is **95%** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this target and how your son/daughter's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be 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 on our website: <http://notredameliverpool.com> and we ask for your full support.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Pupils with attendance below 90% may fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where

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alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)'

When a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) he/she will be allocated an **Attendance Mentor** who will track her attendance on a weekly basis. Contact will be made with parents/carers to discuss the attendance concerns and formalise an **Individual Attendance Plan** to secure an improvement in attendance. The Team Around Notre Dame will receive regular updates on all pupils who are considered Persistent Absentees in order to assess the level of support required - this may include the initiation of an EHAT

Further monitoring and support will be offered by the Research and Development Group focusing on Attendance.

THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE MATTERS IN THIS SCHOOL ARE:-

Attendance Office – Extension 102041

Ms S Doran, Assistant Head of Year 7 – Extension 102066

Mrs J Littleboy, Assistant Head of Year 8 – Extension 102079

Mrs E Garvey, Assistant Head of Year 9 – Extension 102084

Miss N Leppert, Assistant Head of Year 10 - Extension 102083

Miss C Wigelsworth, Assistant Head of Year 11 – Extension 102066

Mrs J Kildare, Assistant Head of Sixth Form – Extension 102071

Mrs L Smith, Head of Year 7 – Extension 102066

Miss E Pope, Head of Year 8 – Extension 102079

Mr A Sweeney, Head of Year 9 – Extension 102084

Miss P McGeoch, Head of Year 10 – Extension 102083

Mr D McKeon, Head of Year 11 – Extension 102066

Miss K Nicol, Head of Sixth Form – Extension 102073

Mrs E Brennan, Assistant Headteacher (Key Stages 3 & 4) – Extension 351607

Mrs A Costello, Assistant Headteacher (Key Stage 5) – Extension 351609

Mrs G Leyland, Assistant Headteacher – Extension 351608

Mrs F Harrison, Headteacher – Extension 351615 (Mrs Ball, Headteacher's PA)

Ms Carolyn Pettigrew, Education Welfare Officer (PAEWO) 0151 233 3938

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SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

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I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Notre Dame Catholic College.

Signed:

Son/Daughter's Name:

Form:

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