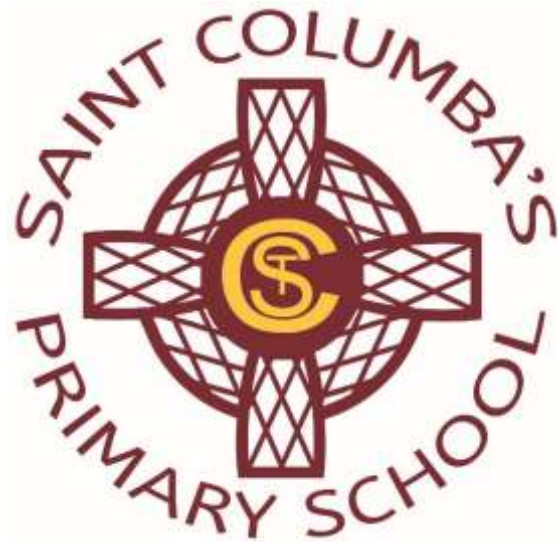


St. Columba's Catholic Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Executive Headteacher

Mrs S. Foster

Head of School

Miss R. Quinn



INTRODUCTION

At St. Columba's Catholic Primary School, we believe that all pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our wish is for all pupils to develop and maintain friendships, make excellent personal progress with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education.

Good attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils. These habits are important life skills to develop as children continue on through their schooling and their future working career. It also ensures that our children feel safe and secure as important, valued members of our school family.

It is our aim, that by working closely with parents and carers and supporting each other we can all ensure that our children develop positive attitudes towards school and reach their full potential that every child has the right to achieve.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Ensure this is a priority for all those in our school community
- Enable individual pupils and the whole school community to reach our attendance target of **96%**
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff
- Build strong relationships with families to overcome barriers
- Work together with parents and other external support agencies to ensure our pupils have access to the best education
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality

Our expectations of pupils is that they:

“Attend school regularly, attend school punctually and attend school ready for the day”

By working closely with parents and carers, we can all ensure that our children develop positive attitudes towards school and reach their full potential. We will regularly update parents about our progress towards our whole school attendance target via our weekly newsletter, The Iona Star and our parents' noticeboard, located outside.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We take a whole-school approach in order to achieve good attendance, and recognise the impact of working together as a school, with parents and other community support agencies.

Role	Name	Responsibility
Chair of Governors	Mr Dinsley	To ensure this policy does not discriminate on any grounds and monitor the implementation of this policy
Executive Headteacher Attendance Lead	Mrs Foster	To ensure this policy is implemented consistently and supports staff in the monitoring of attendance. Ensuring there is a whole-school approach to attendance
Head of School	Miss Quinn	To support the Executive Headteacher and class teachers to implement the aims and objectives of this policy
Assistant Head	Mrs Maddison	To support the Head of school and class teachers to implement the aims and objectives of this policy
Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mrs Foster Miss Quinn Mrs Maddison	To regularly check attendance data for any safeguarding triggers. To liaise with parents during the EHA process
SENCo	Mrs Harman	To regularly check with attendance co-ordinator and follow up any action that may be needed
School Counsellor	Mrs Anderson	To provide support and offer strategies to pupils and parents if behaviours and/or anxieties impact upon attendance
Attendance Co-ordinator	Mrs Craggs	Inputs registers onto our database. Monitors attendance data and follows up any actions that may be needed. Arrange meetings with relevant staff, parents and other support agencies
Class Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery • Reception • Year 1 • Year 2 • Year 3 • Year 4 • Year 5 • Year 6 	Miss O'Connor Mrs Harris Mrs Maddison Mrs Whitelaw Mrs Harman / Mr Gillie Mrs Watson Miss Shackford Mrs Fowler	Record the attendance register in the morning and afternoon. To offer support where needed and to give praise where deserved To encourage children to attend school regularly. To liaise with parents where necessary
External Support Agencies	North Tyneside Local Authority Attendance Team Clennell Education Solutions EHA Support Workers	Provides support to school and families where necessary
Parents		Ensure their child attends schools regularly and on time Notifies school of any absence Attends/Responds to any letters or action plans that have been agreed

Other relevant community and partner agencies which may be offered as support are:

- Family Partners
- Early Help Assessment Team
- Educational Psychologist
- School Nursing Team
- Other relevant external agencies
- Next Step Wellbeing (School Counsellor)
- Clennell Education Solutions
- Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
- Attendance Team at North Tyneside Local Authority
- GP
- Young Carers

OUR SCHOOL DAY AND OUR DAILY ROUTINES

Regular attendance and punctuality are important for effective learning and children should be at school, on time, every day during term time unless there is an unavoidable reason for the absence.

Our school day begins when the gates open at **8:50am** and our morning register is taken at **8:55am** with teaching beginning at **9:00am**. Our registers will be kept open until **9:30am**

To keep children onsite safe, our external gates are locked at 9:00am. After this, entry to school will be through the main door only which is manned by our office staff.

- If a child arrives late, but is before the registers have closed, they will be marked as late (**L**) which counts as present.
- If a child is late and arrives **after** the registers have closed, they will be marked as absent.
- If the child is late due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised.
- If the child is late for no valid reason they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (**U**).

Please see DfE Attendance Codes ('Appendix A') for further information.

Our Breakfast Club is open from 7:30am. St. Columba's offers places to children if punctuality and attendance has become a cause of concern for either school or parents. This is at a charge of £3.00 per session unless your child is in receipt of income related free school meals.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per day	Adds up to days of teaching lost in one year	Number of lessons missed
5 minutes	3 days	15 lessons
10 minutes	6 days	30 lessons
15 minutes	9 days	45 lessons
30 minutes	18 days	90 lessons

Each teacher has responsibility for completing the attendance register twice a day and ensures the paper copy is passed on to Mrs Craggs. This is then recorded electronically onto our school's data system - SIMS. Mrs Craggs, our Attendance Co-ordinator, adopts a "First Day Response" to ensure necessary action is taken if we have not been informed about a child's absence.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to notify school of any absence or illness their child has **no later than 9:30am**. This can be done by:

- Telephoning the school office on **0191 262 3098** (24hour answerphone)
- Email at scpschool@stcolumbasprimary.co.uk
- Sending a text via our School Gateway app

Please note, we need an adult to inform us of a reason of absence, a message from a sibling is not sufficient.

For safeguarding reasons if no explanation has been given for a child's absence, Mrs Craggs, from 9:30am onwards, will contact Priority 1 on the child's emergency details to ask for a reason for absence and an expected return date. If she is unable to make contact with Priority 1, she will then contact Priority 2 and so on, until contact has been made. Therefore, it is **essential** that all contact details are up to date. If no contact is successful, then a home visit will be made on the same day, to ensure the safety of the child. This will be completed by two members of staff.

Our duty is to keep children safe, therefore, during our "First Day Response" protocol, we will prioritise those children considered vulnerable and children who make their own way to school.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents/carers should try to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during the school day are necessary, pupils should only be out of school for the amount of time required for the appointment.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, parents/carers should inform school in advance. Supporting documents, where possible (hospital letter or appointment card) are appreciated.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

If a parent/carer requests leave of absence for their child, for any other reason, it must be done by completing our Absence Request form, which can be found on our website or obtained from the school office. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence.

Year 2 and Year 6 children will not be granted permission for absence in the lead up to and during SATs tests in May of any year.

Only certain circumstances are marked as an authorised leave of absence. We will consider each application individually, taking into account:

- any previous pattern of leave in term time
- the specific circumstances and context of the request

- length of time requested
- the child's general absence/attendance
- the child's educational needs.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Craggs, Miss Quinn or Mrs Foster.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

At St. Columba's we use a Traffic Light System to monitor all children's attendance and punctuality.

Our school attendance target is 96%

98% - 100%	Excellent attendance	0-2 days absent
96% - 97.9%	Good attendance	4-7½ days absent (1 week)
93% - 95.9%	Attendance beginning to cause concern	9½ - 17 days absent (up to 3 weeks)
90% - 92.9%	Attendance causing significant concern and support given	19 – 25 days absent (up to 4 weeks)
89.9% and below	Attendance is now classed as persistent absence and external support involved	27+ days absent from school (up to half a term)

Daily and weekly monitoring of attendance is vital not only from a safeguarding aspect but also to help with early identification and to analyse any patterns in absences and punctuality, so that help and support can be given.

Once daily registers have been taken, the whole school attendance information is recorded in the following ways:

- individual names of absentees
- the total amount of absences in a class
- Reasons for absence e.g. illness and unauthorised holidays
- Punctuality

Our whole school daily attendance percentage and class daily attendance are then calculated and recorded on our attendance display.

All children's attendance is monitored continuously. If children's attendance falls within the Amber Zones (90%-95.9%) or the Red Zone (89.9% and below), Mrs Craggs will notify parents. School and home will then work closely together to ensure children's attendance increases and any identified support is made available.

During the autumn and spring parents' evening, class teachers will share each child's attendance record. Attendance will also be recorded on pupil's end of year school report.

The table below shows the procedures throughout our attendance system and what triggers different action needed.

Days missed	Attendance %	Action	Who
0-2 days	98 - 100% Excellent attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise through texts / emails / letters / postcards and notes in registers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn
4-7½ days (up to 1 week)	96 – 97.9% Good attendance		
9½ - 17 days (up to 3 weeks)	93 – 95.9% Attendance beginning to cause concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact parent to notify of Amber Zone • Monitor over a period of three weeks • Review after three week period • If attendance has improved – praise through texts / email / letter / postcards and notes in registers • Green Zone letter sent if improved to Green Zone • Amber Zone Improvement letter sent if improved within the zone • At Risk letter sent if attendance is at 93% and invite parents to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs and Class Teacher • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs
19 – 25 days (up to 4 weeks)	90 – 92.9% Attendance causing significant concern and support given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop action plan including any external support that may be useful • Monitor over a period of three weeks • Review after three week period • If attendance has improved – praise through texts / email / letter / postcards and notes in registers • Improvement letter sent if improved • At Risk of persistent absence letter sent if attendance is at 91% • Persistent absence letter sent if attendance is at 90% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Craggs / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn / Class Teacher / Parent • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs
27+ days (up to half a term)	89.9% and below Attendance is now classed as persistent absence and external support involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop or amend existing action plan for persistent absenteeism including any external support that is needed to improve barriers • Monitor daily over two week period • Review after two week period • If attendance has improved – praise through texts / email / letter / postcards and notes in registers • Improvement letter sent if improved • Serious cause for concern letter sent if attendance has deteriorated further and continual daily monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn / Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Parent / Pupil • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn • Mrs Craggs / Class Teacher / Mrs Foster / Miss Quinn • Mrs Craggs • Mrs Craggs

ILLNESS

In most cases, absences for illness will be authorised. Our school follows the 2022 DfE School Attendance Guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require further information to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, we will make the parent/carer aware of this expectation.

HEALTH NEEDS

If a child will be away from school for 15 days or more, due to health and medical needs, we will support and liaise with parents and the appropriate medical professionals and develop an individual action plan. A named member of staff will be responsible to have daily contact. If a child is well enough to do school work, this will be made available.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absence means that school has given approval for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from school, or has accepted an explanation offered as justification for absence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absence is when school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of school. Unauthorised absences include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late after the registers have closed
- Shopping
- Birthday treat / family treat
- Child refusing to come to school
- Parent unwell
- Another sibling unwell
- Waking up late and not coming to school
- Waiting home for a repair or a parcel being delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)

In the case of term time leave – if a pupil is kept away from school longer than agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A child is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any case that has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level, is given priority and parents will be informed of this.

PA children are monitored carefully through weekly meetings between Mrs Foster, Miss Quinn, Mrs Craggs, class teacher and other relevant professionals. Monitoring occurs on a daily basis.

Persistent absenteeism impacts children's achievement and attainment, therefore, all PA children and their parents/carers will be regularly supported through an individual action plan which may include any external services (please see below).

SUPPORT FOR POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes children can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, we will work together with parents to plan a way forward. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way possible.

When we have concerns about the attendance of pupils, we will do our best to work and support alongside parents and listen so we can understand the barriers that are causing poor attendance. We will develop an action plan with parents, and together find the right support needed. In some cases, this may include external agency involvement (please see below).

CELEBRATION AND REWARDS

Every week we celebrate "Class of the Week" for the class who has had the most attendance that week. A trophy is presented which is kept in the classroom for the following week. This is also published on our newsletter, the Iona Star, and will be displayed on our attendance display in the hall and in the Parents' Noticeboard outside. If any class achieves 100% all week then this will be celebrated with the children and the class teacher.

Notes in class registers, letters, emails, texts and positive postcards of praise are sent to all children who have excellent and good attendance. We understand that not every child will achieve excellent and good attendance for the whole school year, as unforeseeable circumstances (e.g illness) are inevitable. However, we do recognise improvement that individual pupils make no matter what zone they are in and we will give praise for this achievement. This will be in the form of notes in the register, texts, emails, letters and positive postcards sent home so parents can also be involved in this achievement.

End of year celebrations include the class who has had the highest attendance all year and individual pupil attendance achievements.

EXTERNAL AGENCY SUPPORT

Where necessary, school may take the advice and support from external agencies such as:

- North Tyneside Local Authority Attendance Team
- Clennel Education Solutions
- BBCET

In very exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority may choose to issue a penalty.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is in conjunction with the Department of Education (DfE) 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2022 and the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental health Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

DfE ATTENDANCE CODES

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (e.g. present at another school)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School is closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances