

# Attendance – Guidance for Families

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. The Act states, “If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”.

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this. Schools are expected to monitor all pupils’ attendance records closely and to share these with the Local Authority and with the next school when pupils transfer.

**Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances.** It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis. A Term Time Absence request form will need to be completed.

## **Penalty Notices**

When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered ‘exceptional’, the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice. In considering whether to do so, the school will consult the latest advice

given from the LA. If the absence meets the threshold in this document, the school will request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

**The following situations might be considered examples of ‘exceptional circumstances’:**

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);

- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Disability or respite leave;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence).

***Any request for absence which might be considered as ‘exceptional circumstances’ should be put in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, including any relevant supporting documents. The decision whether to grant leave, and if so, how much, remains with the Headteacher. Parents / carers will be notified of the Headteacher’s decision at the earliest opportunity.***

**The following (not exhaustive) are examples of situations which would not typically be considered as exceptional:**

- Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates; ● Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Attendance at a wedding or christening;
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK; ● Limitations on parents / carers leave’ entitlement or dates; parents / carers’ profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays;
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad.

## **Medical and Other Appointments**

Parents / carers must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents / carers must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for his/her own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a parent or carer can attend an appointment for someone else. We will require to see confirmation of all appointments within school time in the form of a letter/text.

**Updated January 2023**

### Lateness

The school gates open at 8:40am and the register is taken at **8.55am**. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day but within 10 minutes, they will be registered as 'late'; this is not an unauthorised absence. If a student arrives after **09:05am** this will be marked as an unauthorised late mark (U) and will be counted as an **unauthorised absence**. Please note as per our attendance policy we can issue a fixed penalty notice if a pupil has 15% unauthorised absence over a period of six weeks or a pattern of three or more non-consecutive school days. This can include unauthorised late marks.

### Reporting Absence for Illness

Parents should inform the school by telephone of the reasons for their child's absence **by 9.00am** on the **first** day of the child's absence and on **each subsequent** day of absence. If you are unable to get through, please leave a message on the absence line. If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will email or telephone the parents to ascertain the reason. Please make sure that we have up to date contact details. **If no reason is obtained this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.**

### What is authorised and unauthorised attendance?

#### ❖ We will not authorise absence due to:

- Lateness
- Other family members' appointments
- Transport difficulties
- Holidays in term time

#### ❖ We are able to authorise (at the Headteacher's discretion) absence due to:

- Illness or medical treatment
- Education in a setting other than school (this would be pre-arranged and agreed with the school)

**Updated January 2023**

- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances such as those given in the examples overleaf.

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below **for any reason**. The attendance of all pupils at our Academies are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. **If a pupil's attendance falls below 92%, we will write to parents and will require medical evidence for all future absence to be authorised.**

#### **Did you know...?**

90% attendance means that your child misses on average:

- One half day every week
- Nearly four weeks every school year

#### **Did you know...?**

Being 5 minutes late every day means missing about 3 days of school every year!

***This document has been updated in January 2023 in line with St Pancras Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (and will be updated in line with further policy updates.***