



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St Richard Reynolds Catholic High School

Policy: Attendance and Punctuality

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Introduction

If pupils are to achieve their full potential, high attendance rates are essential. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- to age, ability and aptitude and
- to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular school or otherwise.'

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that a child attends school during term time and that the school is properly informed of the reason for any absence as soon as possible. 'Family holiday' does not qualify as a reason for leave of absence except where exceptional circumstances exist. It is important to instil children with a respect and enthusiasm for education, and it is counter-productive if parents display a casual approach by planning vacations when their children should be in school. Absence from school during term time disrupts the class overall as teachers must spend time ensuring that absent children catch up on lost time. It is also a safeguarding concern. We will refer parents who persist in removing their children without authorisation to the Education Welfare Officer and may remove children from the school roll. St Richard Reynolds Catholic College will support parents and pupils in achieving excellent attendance. Our target for pupils is 96% attendance.

Aim:

- To achieve excellent attendance and punctuality

We will achieve this by:

- keeping regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at registration and at the start of each lesson
- ensuring that pupils and parents are aware of the crucial importance of good attendance

- monitoring every pupil's attendance and punctuality
- having clear procedures for reporting absence
- ensuring high standards of punctuality
- providing a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- referring irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service
- Celebrating and rewarding good attendance

Absence Procedures:

- Parents/carers are asked to telephone or email the College each day if a child is unable to attend College. The College office team will note the call and put the appropriate mark in the register along with a comment explaining the absence
- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30 am the College will endeavour to contact them that day by telephone or email messages
- After the fifth day of absence, if there is no contact from parents, we will contact the Single Point of Access
- The child should bring a note signed by their parent confirming the reason for their absence when they return to College
- Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of College hours. Where absence is unavoidable, parents must seek permission in advance by completing an absence request form
- Pupils should not leave the College site unless they have a note from their parents which their form tutor will sign that morning. Pupils should then hand in the letter to the College office when they sign out. Pupils should sign back in at the College office on their return
- If absence is due to medical grounds, evidence of this must be provided eg letter from doctor or consultant

Requesting Leave

- Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to authorised absence for family holidays
- If a family believes the circumstances to be exceptional then, parents/carers should complete an Absence Request form.

- Where such leave is sanctioned it constitutes an authorised absence. Where the College and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from College the absence will be marked as unauthorised as will any period beyond that which has been agreed
- If you decide to take your child out of school, it is not our policy to provide school work to cover the period of absence

Punctuality

Punctuality to College is crucial and tutor time at the beginning of the day with a pupil/stutor is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to College causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. Pupils should attend College "full time" and they should remain in College attending all timetabled lessons. Pupils should ensure they arrive in good time so as to be ready and prepared for the start of the College day at 8.30. The College site is open from 8.00.

- Pupils should be in their form rooms at 8.30, prepared for lessons; pupils who are not in their form room at 8.30 will be marked late
- Pupils who are late must press the buzzer at the gate and then sign in at the College office before moving immediately to their lesson or form room
- The number of minutes by which a pupil is late for tutor time or for lessons will be recorded on SIMS and totalled: this will trigger a 'late detention' in which they will make up the time
- Avoidable lateness beyond 9.30 am constitutes unauthorised absence and can legally be the basis of an offence by the parent/care. A different mark (U) will be used to distinguish them from those who are "unpunctual"
- Those who are late but who arrive before 9.30 am will be counted as present and their attendance will be indicated by a 'L' in the register

Understanding Types of Absence

It is a legal requirement to take an attendance register twice a day. Morning registers are taken in form time. Afternoon registration is taken in the first lesson of the afternoon. This shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from College is classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Only the College can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. The College is required to keep records of attendance and to return figures to the Local Authority (LA) of absences under two categories:

- **Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from College for a good reason such as illness or medical appointments;
- **Unauthorised** absences are those that the College does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off College unnecessarily
 - truancy before or during the College day
 - absences which have never been properly explained
 - pupils who arrive at College too late to get a mark (after 9.30 am)
 - holidays
- **Persistent absence** is defined as 15% absence (85% attendance). Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% will be referred to the Education Welfare Service

How we will support pupils with poor attendance

Examples of poor attendance include particular patterns of absence (eg certain days of week or missing days at the end or beginning of term) and missing ten days of school, whether authorised or unauthorised. Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the College at an early stage and work together with the staff to resolve any problems. The College can use a range of strategies to support good attendance including support from the form tutor and Pastoral Leader or a personalised Attendance Plan. Support can also be sought from external agencies such as the Strengthening Families Team. The College recognises that some groups of pupils, such as those with medical conditions, may struggle to maintain good attendance and will support pupils, for example, by providing work if absence is on medical grounds.

The College will keep parents informed about attendance through Grade Collections and reports. Where there is a concern about attendance, parents will be informed by letter. Letters about attendance will be sent when a pupil's attendance drops below 94%. If no improvement is seen, monitoring letters will be sent to inform parents that their child's attendance will be monitored over a period of four weeks.

If attendance does not improve or falls below 85%, the College will refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who will also try to resolve the situation by working directly with the family and College. In some cases a referral to another agency may be appropriate. If attendance remains poor over time following the College's work to improve it in collaboration with parents/carers and the formal involvement of the EWO, the EWO may use legal action which can result in the parent/carer being taken to court and being fined.

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The Education Welfare Service can be contacted through Richmond Single Point of Access at 020 8891 7969 or spa@richmond.gov.uk.

Pupils changing school or moving out of the area

If a pupil moves school, a letter from the parent/carer is required including a forwarding address and the name and address of the new school. The College EWO will be informed of the de-registration.

Responsibility for Attendance and Punctuality

Parents are responsible for

- Ensuring that their child is in school on time
- Providing explanations for absence promptly
- Supporting the College by reinforcing the importance of excellent attendance

Pupils are responsible for

- Getting to lessons and form time punctually
- Catching up with any work missed while they were away

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting attendance at St Richard Reynolds Catholic College. Attendance is monitored by Ms Anne Murphy, Vice Principal, who is also responsible for

- writing to parents whose child's attendance is a cause for concern
- ensuring that teachers complete registers accurately
- meeting with parents of children whose attendance falls below 90%
- working with the EWO and other external agencies as appropriate to ensure that parents and pupils can access support where needed
- ensuring that parents are aware of the College's expectations through the Parent Handbook, induction interviews and Year 6 Information evening
- ensuring the Child Missing Education procedures are followed

The **Attendance Officer**, Mrs Eileen Wilson, is responsible for

- following the College's procedures for first day contact
- issuing attendance letters
- advising the Vice Principal of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly.
- providing data on fortnightly basis to the Vice Principal
- making sure the Vice Principal know about families where bad habits are forming
- collating data for inclusion in reports and attendance returns to the LA
- checking and filing all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers
- passing on messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.

Pastoral leaders are responsible for

- monitoring the attendance of pupils whose attendance is below 96%
- supporting form tutors in their attendance monitoring role
- promoting good attendance in induction and PSHCE lessons
- ensuring that attendance certificates are given every half term to pupils with attendance and punctuality at 100%

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for

- promoting regular attendance with their forms through rewards and PSHCE lessons and making it clear that poor or erratic attendance is not expected or acceptable.
- ensuring that registers are always completed appropriately
- talking to pupils about the reasons for their absence
- supporting pupils in their forms whose attendance is between 96% and 90% to improve their attendance, for example, by discussing concerns with parents
- supporting the Attendance Officer in establishing reasons for absence
- passing on concerns over attendance.
- following absence, helping pupils to catch up work by providing a 'Return to College' sheet and checking that pupils complete it

