



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School

Policy: Attendance and Punctuality

Date of publication: November 2022

Date of approval by Governing Body: November 2022

Date of next review: as required

St Richard Reynolds is a Catholic community rooted in the love of Christ in which we seek to help each other to become the person whom God has created us to be; and where children come first and all are loved, listened to, challenged and inspired.

We love our young people, and will never give up on anyone. The simple message for success at our College is simply to come to school every day, on time, in full school uniform, **ready and equipped to learn...**

Rationale

We believe that all pupils benefit from regular attendance at College; it is essential to the development of the whole person and maximises opportunities for each pupil to reach their full potential. St Richard Reynolds Catholic College is committed to working with parents/carers to ensure that their children regularly attend College. This is achieved by providing a caring, supportive learning environment which allows issues which prevent regular attendance to be identified and dealt with at an early stage.

We expect that pupils' attendance and punctuality should be as close to 100% as possible. The minimum expected level of attendance for St Richard Reynolds Catholic College is 97% attendance.

- Regular absence seriously affects a pupil's learning. For example, an attendance rate of 95% equates to missing almost 2 weeks of schooling each year. Any pupil's absence also disrupts teaching routines as teachers must spend time ensuring that absent children catch up on lost time.
- There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement.
- Regular absence is also a safeguarding concern. When dealing with absence, staff will be mindful that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, particularly child sexual exploitation, FGM or forced marriage. We will refer parents who persist in removing their children without authorisation to the Education Welfare Officer.

The law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 (part 1) states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) 'to any special educational need, he/she may have either by regular school or otherwise'.

In law it is an offence if a parent/ carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school in which they have registered and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444 Education Act 1996 (prosecution of parents) or section 36 of the Children Act 1989 (Education supervision order) to enforce attendance at school where necessary. (Appendix 2) regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff.

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. 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 holidays when their children should be in school.

Aim

To achieve excellent attendance and punctuality at St Richard Reynolds Catholic College, pupils and staff should enjoy learning, experience success and develop their full potential. The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff.

We will achieve this by:

- keeping regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at registration in the morning and after lunch break.
- 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 a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- referring irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer
- celebrating and rewarding good attendance.

Absence Procedures

- Class teachers complete the register shortly after 8.45 am and again at 12.45 pm using SIMs Lesson Monitor.
- Parents/carers are asked to telephone or email (attendance@srcc.org.uk) the College each day if a child is unable to attend College by 8.30 am. The College Attendance 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 email or telephone call is received from the parent/carers by 9am the College will endeavour to contact them that day by telephone or email messages. All named contacts for the pupil will be contacted until a reason for absence is determined. If no contact is established after leaving relevant messages with all named contacts the College will report the absence to the police.
- Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of College hours. Where absence is unavoidable, parents must seek permission in advance by emailing attendance@srcc.org.uk and include relevant documentation. This should be done 24hrs in advance unless an

emergency appointment is made.

- If an emergency medical or dental appointment is required the parent/carer must email attendance@srrcc.org.uk by 8.30 am. This absence will be noted on SIMs Lesson Monitor - pupils will not be permitted to leave the College site unless prior notification has been received.
- Pupils must sign back into the College at the main reception upon their return.
- If absence is due to medical grounds, evidence of this must be provided e.g. letter/ appointment card from doctor or consultant.

Understanding Types of Absence

It is a legal requirement to take an attendance register twice a day. 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, medical appointments, bereavement.

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 not been properly explained
 - pupils who arrive at College too late to get an AM mark (after 9.30 am)
 - holidays
 - birthdays
-
- there is no entitlement to authorised absence for family holidays during term time. If parents decide to take a child out of school, it is not College policy to provide school work to cover the period of absence.
 - persistent absence is defined as 10% absence (90% attendance). Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Unauthorised leave

For holidays taken by students who have over 90% attendance:

- parents/carers put notification in writing to attendance@srrcc.org.uk in advance
- absence is noted on the College register as unauthorised
- a letter is sent to parents/carers by the Head of Primary informing them of the impact it will have on their attendance figure.

For holidays taken by students who have under 90% attendance:

- Head of Primary or Deputy Head calls parents/carers to discuss in detail

- if the absence is longer than 5 days the Head of Primary or Deputy Head invites parents/carers for a meeting in College to discuss impact
- absence is noted on the College register as unauthorised and the local authority Education Welfare Service is notified
- the pupil is placed on attendance monitoring which means any future absences would be unauthorised unless medical documentation is provided.

Holidays 2 weeks or over

The College submits a SPA referral to the local authority for Legal Attendance Meeting.

Punctuality

Punctuality to College is crucial and registration time with a pupil's class teacher is an important part of the school 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 lessons. Pupils should ensure they arrive in good time so as to be ready and prepared for the start of the day at 8.45am. The primary gates are opened from 8.35a.m.

- Pupils should be in their classrooms by 8.45 am, prepared for lessons; pupils who are not in their classroom by 8.45 am will be marked late.
- Pupils who are late sign in at the main reception before being taken to their classroom.
- The number of minutes by which a pupil is late for class will be recorded on SIMS and totalled.
- 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 late.
- 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.
- If a pupil is persistently late a meeting will be called with their parents/carers and the Head of Primary or Deputy Head to put a plan in place for improved punctuality.

How the College will support pupils with poor attendance

Examples of poor attendance include particular patterns of absence (e.g. certain days of the 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 class teacher. Support can also be sought from external agencies.g. Family support or the School Nurse. 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 parent consultations 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 96%. 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.

Education Welfare Service

The College will refer the child (applicable to children aged 5-16) to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) if:

- Attendance is below 90%
- A pupil has missed 10 or more sessions.

The EWO will 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

Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. If a pupil does not attend school for a maximum of 5 continuous days, with no contact made by Parent/Carer, the child will be regarded as a Child Missing Education and passed on to the EWS. The College will attempt to contact the parent or carer. If after 20 consecutive days of absence the child is still missing from education and no contact has been established, the College will remove the pupil from the School Roll, after confirmation with the Education Welfare Service.

Removal from roll

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 child will not be removed from roll until the school receives written confirmation from the new school that the child is on roll. The College will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

Responsibility for Attendance and Punctuality

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children allow enough time to get to school before morning registration including taking into account local transport conditions
- providing explanations for absence promptly
- not taking children out of school in term time for any reason (unless there are exceptional circumstances and the absence has been requested following the procedures set out in this policy and authorised by the school)
- supporting the College by reinforcing the importance of excellent attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- getting to lessons punctually
- catching up with any work missed while they were away
- following all school procedures.

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting attendance at St Richard Reynolds Catholic College. Attendance is monitored by the Head of Primary, Miss McMullen and Deputy Head for Inclusion, Mrs Forsdick. They are responsible for:

- deciding what constitutes authorised/unauthorised absence
- 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 letters and curriculum evenings.
- ensuring the Child Missing Education procedures are followed.

The **Attendance Team** is responsible for:

- following the College's procedures for first day contact
- issuing attendance letters
- advising the Head of Primary and Deputy Head of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly
- ensuring the Head of Primary and Deputy Head are aware of families where bad habits are forming
- collating data for inclusion in reports and attendance returns to the LA
- requesting, checking and filing all absence notes and ensuring 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 members of staff.

The Primary Leadership team are responsible for:

- monitoring the attendance of pupils whose attendance is below 96%
- supporting class teachers in their attendance monitoring role
- promoting good attendance in assemblies
- ensuring that attendance certificates are given out with attendance and punctuality at 100%.

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- promoting regular attendance with their classes through rewards and making it clear that poor or erratic attendance is not acceptable
- accurate completion of all registers within 10 minutes of morning and afternoon registration
- talking to pupils about the reasons for their absence
- supporting pupils in their class 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 on missed work.