



Oratory R.C. Primary and Nursery School



**'Shine as to be a light
to others'**

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date of this Policy:	Reviewed by:	Date to be ratified by FGB	Date for next review:	Date to be next ratified by FGB:	Review Frequency
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Premises Committee• Safeguarding Team	January 2022	January 2024	January 2024	Every two years
How will Governors assure the Oratory community that this policy is being implemented:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Team termly report to Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Premises Committee• Termly Head Teacher's Report• External Audits				

Mission Statement

‘Shine as to be a light to others’

Saint John Henry Newman

Our School’s Mission

At the Oratory R.C. Primary and Nursery School every aspect of school life is founded on Gospel Values. Our choice of Mission Statement, “Shine as to be a light to others”, is inspired by the writing and teaching of the Saint John Henry Newman, an advocate of personalised learning, and of Saint Philip Neri, who believed that “cheerfulness strengthens the heart and makes us persevere in a good life; therefore the servant of God ought always to be in good spirits.”

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and happy immersive learning environment, based upon the living tradition of the Church, drawing continually upon current educational research.

Our School prepares children to meet the opportunities and challenges of life in contemporary Britain and within a fast changing technological and globalised world through an innovative curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of all.

A community of lifelong learners, our School and Governing Body work in close partnership with: our families, the Fathers and Brothers of the Oratory, our local parish, the local and wider community, and external consultants. We work together to enable all to fulfill their spiritual, academic, emotional and social potential. We are a team, and together we make a difference.

Our School’s Vision

Christ is at the centre of all we do.

Our School is a learning community for all: pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers, outside agencies, and the local and wider community.

Ours is a strong culture of unconditional support for one another’s learning, where all listen respectfully and welcome constructive criticism and challenge.

We offer a vibrant and exciting curriculum and learning experience, ensuring that all pupils, from whatever point they start on entering our School, make at least good progress.

We aim to help our children discover and develop their God-given talents and to encourage them to grow in responsibility for themselves and for others.

We believe that everyone has a right to equal access and opportunity, and equal freedom to work and learn, and freedom from unjust discrimination and from prejudice.

Our practices promote the right of all to participate in school life by actively promoting equality and social inclusion without distinction of culture, religion, language, ethnic background or race.

Our School's context and culture

Our School mission is based on the belief that every human being is a unique person created in the image and likeness of God, with a God-given potential for growth and an eternal destiny in heaven. Our staff have a special vocation to make sure that all our children receive the very best educational experience in order to grow in the love and knowledge of God, their neighbour, themselves and the created world.¹ We see this as integral to our Catholic ethos.

As a school we work together to embed and sustain this ethos. The word "ethos" can be defined as: "a way of living, behaving and doing things by people who, though diverse, follow common values and are linked by a shared vision of life."⁵ Our School's Catholic ethos promotes and helps to shape a strong set of values.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Values

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – **pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education**. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

- 95% (9 and a half school days or more out of 190 days in the school year) is shown to **COMPROMISE** pupil attainment and achievement.
- 90 % (nearly four weeks, 19 days) has a **SIGNIFICANT** impact on pupil attainment and achievement.

Birmingham City Council Leave in Term Time Guidance for School and Academies, September 2013.

Aim:

- To provide an environment which encourages all pupils to attend school regularly and punctually, in order to achieve their full potential, succeed in school and in their future lives.
- It is the responsibility of the whole school community ie: all school staff, governors, parents / carers and pupils to promote excellent attendance in order to safeguard the children in our school.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

This policy is based on guidance from:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the School Census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

In order to promote excellent attendance the following procedures are applied:

- 1) Parents / carers are informed of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and are asked to sign the home/school agreement to this affect.
- 2) Parents/carers are given a copy of the Attendance and Punctuality Procedures and Expectations at the Oratory
- 3) A copy of the Birmingham Education Welfare Service Spotlight letter is given out every September and to all new parents/carers
- 4) It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to notify the school of a pupil's absence. This should be by phone or in person on the first day of absence and every subsequent day, or beforehand if the absence is planned eg: a holiday, medical appointment or other reason
- 5) The registers are checked every morning (after 9.15am) and where a child is absent without a phone call from the parent / carer, a call is made to find out why the child is absent. Contact numbers are kept in class files in the main office and on the school's database
- 6) If contact isn't made and there are concerns then two members of the Safeguarding Team will make a home visit
- 7) Attendance is monitored weekly by the Head Teacher and Safeguarding Team. Parents and carers are notified by letter, a face to face meeting or a phone call of any concerns.
- 8) Feedback to parents/carers – a graph showing the attendance for each class is placed on the noticeboard in the main reception area on a weekly basis. This information can also be found in the school newsletter and the data is uploaded onto the school website.
- 9) A chart showing the impact of absence in terms of lost learning time in relation to lessons, days and weeks lost in a school year is on display in the main reception area, parent / carer information leaflet and on the school website.
- 10) Analysis of trends – attendance is analysed to identify trends in absenteeism (year groups, different ethnic groups, SEND and FSM) on a weekly, monthly, half termly and termly basis by the Head Teacher and Safeguarding Team. Parents/carers whose children's attendance is below 95% are contacted and invited to work in partnership with the school.

Strategies for promoting or rewarding excellent and improving attendance:

Aims

- To ensure 100% attendance and punctuality (100% termly attendance) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Half Termly Attendance Assembly – children with 100% attendance are recognised in a special assembly on a half termly basis. They receive a special certificate and a 100% attendance lapel pin. Children are encouraged to work towards a 100% attendance pin each half termly. If a child gets 6 100% Attendance pins throughout the academic year they attend a special end of year trip.

Class Attendance – the class with the best attendance each half term takes part in a cinema and pop corn experience.

The school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents and carers of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

School Attendance and Punctuality Area - This area in the foyer, includes attendance information and information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality. Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality, is also included.

A welcoming, immersive and creative learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the Class Teacher's, Teaching Assistants and the Strategic Leadership Team, to ensure this on a termly basis.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality - Teachers and teaching assistants regularly promote good attendance and punctuality within their class.

Learning Together Day provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, further action is taken as outlined in this policy.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case.

Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Long Term/Serious Medical Conditions

Where a child is suffering from a long term or serious illness, the school works with the family to ensure that any support needed in getting the child to school is given and systems are put in place to help with and support the child's learning.

The family are asked to keep the school informed of appointments and absences.

Application for Term Time Absence

The Oratory DOES NOT authorise time term absence unless there are exceptional or sensitive circumstances.

Extended Holidays In line with Birmingham Local Authority, **'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to write to the school using the Application for Term Time Absence form which is available to download from the website or obtain from the School office. Applications will be considered by the Head Teacher and Home School Support Worker, who will reply to the request within 5 - 10 working days.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.
- These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

If a child's absence is causing concern the following steps are taken:

- 1) The parent/carer is contacted to see if there are any problems - medical or personal - that the school should know about. Where possible support is given to the family in order to raise the attendance of the child. If there are no obvious difficulties, the parent/carer is reminded of the importance of good attendance for their child and notified that action will be taken if the attendance/punctuality does not improve. The parent/carer is given a copy of the table showing the number of days, lessons and weeks missed over the course of a year in order to show the impact of absence on their child's learning.
- 2) If the child's attendance improves as a result of discussion with the parent/carer, a letter thanking them for their support and acknowledging the improvement is sent home Attendance will continue to be monitored.
- 3) ***If the child's attendance does not improve significantly then the School's Safeguarding team decides upon next steps which include:***
 - A referral to the school nurse for a health check
 - Support with housing, transport or medical issues
 - The second spotlight letter is sent to parents and then if still no changes - A referral to Birmingham Education Welfare Service – **Spotlight**. This is a formal legal system, which involves fining parents for their child's poor attendance; over a specified period of time. The action is taken with an identified cohort of pupils (a year group). **All families are formally written to by the school, outlining the Spotlight process.**

Formal meetings are held after a specified period of time, for pupils with continued poor attendance. Targets are set and attendance is monitored for a further specified period of time. **Education Welfare Service court section issues fines to families, whose pupils fail to improve their attendance.**

Punctuality

Poor punctuality impacts on learning not only for the individual but for the class as a whole. The responsibility for good punctuality lies with the parent/carer.

Expectations

- Doors for school open at 8.50am, children can begin to come into school
- School begins at 8.55am
- School doors are closed at 9am.
- If a child arrives after 9am, they report to the Office where they are entered into the school late book.
- If a child arrives at school between 9.01am and 9.15am, marked down as an L (Late).
- If a child arrives after 9.15am, he/she will be marked down on the school register as U (Unauthorised absence)

To promote good punctuality the following procedure are applied:

- 1) Punctuality is monitored weekly by the Head Teacher and Safeguarding Team. Parents and carers are notified by letter, a face to face meeting or a phone call of any concerns.
- 2) Feedback to parents/carers – a graph showing the number of lates for each class is placed on the noticeboard in the main reception area on a weekly basis. This information can also be found in the school newsletter and the data is uploaded onto the school website.
- 3) A chart showing the impact of lost learning time due to lateness, in relation to lessons, days and weeks lost in a school year is on display in the main reception area, parent / carer information leaflet and on the school website.
- 4) Analysis of trends – registers are analysed to identify trends on a weekly, monthly, half termly and termly basis by the Head Teacher.

If a child's punctuality is giving cause for concern then the following steps are taken:

- 1) Parents / carers are contacted and made aware of the problem. The number of lates is explained and they are asked if there are any problems the school should know about or could help them with.
- 2) If the child's punctuality improves then a letter is sent thanking the parents for their co-operation.