



## **Attendance Policy** (including Children Missing from Education)

At St Philomena's School, we see education as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for your child, and we look to you to support this objective.

The school gate opens for all pupils at 8.30am. The school day begins with registration at 8.30am for pupils from Forms V and VI and 8.45am for pupils from Reception to Form IV. Pupils are required to be in school ready to register at these times.

The school day ends at 3.40pm for pupils from Reception and 3.45pm for pupils from Forms I to VI. Optional activities run from 3.45pm and 4.45pm Monday to Friday.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day unless collected by a parent or accompanied by a member of staff for an educational visit or sporting fixture, the dates of which will have been notified to parents in advance.

Requests to collect a child before the end of the school day or for them to arrive after morning registration for exceptional reasons (other than medical or dental appointments) should be sent to the Headteacher for approval at least two weeks in advance. **Please note that it is the school's policy, and supported by the School's Governors, not to authorise children to arrive late, leave early or miss lessons on a regular basis.**

Requests for absence must be made in writing and should reach the school preferably a week in advance of the planned absence (except in an emergency, when parents are asked to telephone the school before 8.30am). Requests for exceptional absence (absence for days other than medical or dental appointments) should be sent to the Headteacher for approval at least two weeks in advance.

If your child is ill, please message the class teacher by ClassDojo or telephone the school office before 8.30am on the first day of absence, giving a reason for the absence. We will always telephone home on the first day of any unexplained absence in order to make sure that your child is safe.

Term dates are always sent to parents more than a year in advance in order for you to arrange your holidays without disrupting your child's education. **Please note that it is the school's policy, in line with Government regulations and supported by the School's Governors, not to authorise holidays to be taken during term time.**

Regular daily attendance at school is important for all children to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children by providing them with education and support networks. We promote regular attendance supporting children to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community and believe this helps them to make the most of life opportunities and maximise their educational achievement.

## CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

As outlined under Regulation 5 within the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, all schools (including independent schools) must make returns to the local authority each time a pupil is **added** to the school admissions register or **deleted** from the school's register.

All schools (including independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from their school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. This does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the register at standard transition points, and at St Philomena's School this is at the end of Year 6. Likewise, all schools must notify the local education authority within 5 days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.

St Philomena's School must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child jointly with the local authority before deleting a pupil's name from their register.

### School Responsibilities

The school has responsibility to enter pupils on their admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Where reasonably possible, we will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

When pupils leave St Philomena's School the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible.

We monitor pupils' attendance through the daily register. We will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed **10 school days** or more without permission. We monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance by working with parents and carers. In extreme cases, a pupils' poor attendance will be referred to the local authority. If a pupil is missing from school and the child is subject to a child protection plan and/or is a looked after child, the school will notify the key worker within the first 24 hours of the unauthorised absence if no home contact can be made.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for **10 days** after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for **20 consecutive school days**, the pupil can be removed from our admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if we do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, we are required to record the following in the admission register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live.
- The new address.
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, we are required to record in the admission register:

- The name of the new school.
- The date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

As an independent school we have a safeguarding duty (Part 3 of the Independent School Standards, DfE, April 2019) in respect of our pupils, and as part of this we will investigate any unexplained absences. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the 'Keeping children safe in education' statutory guidance.

The DfE publication 'Children missing education' (DfE, September 2016) describes the legal requirements in relation to registers. DfE advice about wider attendance issues is also to be found in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, September 2022).