

# St Richard's Catholic College

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY** (from School Handbook)



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: June 2024

Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

The Governing Body will review the policy in June 2025

# Attendance Policy (for parents)

This policy reflects the vision and aims of St Richard's Catholic College by:

- Encouraging staff, parents/carers and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to school attendance.

## Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent/carer.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, **not by the parents/carers**, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- holidays in term time
- absences which are more than three days or over three phases without medical evidence.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Behaviour and Attendance Service. The Team Around School Setting (TASS) Service will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, they can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3-months imprisonment.

## Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

## **Daily Attendance**

In line with County policy, parents are requested to telephone the Attendance Officer by 8.30am on the first day of a pupil's absence and every day thereafter. Telephone calls must be followed by a note when the child returns to school. When it is known that a pupil is likely to be away for more than a few days, parents must inform the school prior to the absence.

We monitor all pupils' attendance rates, and in cases of long term (more than 3 days) and frequent (after the third separate episode) absence and every day thereafter, the school will request medical evidence, otherwise a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer or the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service will occur.

The EWO will monitor the attendance of any child who falls into the category of Persistent Absence (PA). Pupils in this category will receive an initial letter raising awareness to their parents. If the attendance fails to improve, further letters will be sent to parents via the EWO. Meetings with parents will be requested and attendance targets set in place. Failure to meet these targets will result in an ESBAS referral and/or punitive measures such as legal procedures or fines. The school is keen to work in partnership with parents, pupils and pastoral staff to ensure support is in place and punitive measures are seen as a last resort when there is a lack of parental engagement with the school.

## **Holidays**

Permission for pupils to go on holiday or to participate in extra-curricular activities during term time will only be given in exceptional cases, and not as a matter of course. Parents must write to the Principal well in advance (at least 14 days) and fill in the Withdrawal from Learning absence form issued by East Sussex. If the request is not authorised, and the holiday is still taken, then a Penalty Notice will be issued. The penalty is £120 per parent ie a two-parent family will receive a penalty fine of £240, which drops to £120 if the fine is paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this may result in further legal intervention. Please be aware that holiday requests will not be authorised in term time.

**The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children or day trips. Leave, however, may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which have to be in school time. However, as far as possible, all medical appointments should be made for the end of the school day.**

## **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- Attendance target: 96% whole school; 97% pupil
- We have a rewards system in place for good attendance. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance in each semester will receive a certificate. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the whole year will receive a voucher as well as a certificate. House points are given for excellent weekly and termly attendance. As a school we consider attendance that drops below 96% to be a concern and a major barrier to learning. Parents will be contacted by the school if this occurs.

Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Principal – Mr P Barber

Senior Assistant Principal – Mr J Campbell

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs E Dann

Pastoral Leaders: Mr J Bligh (Year 7), Mr J Steele (Year 8), Mrs A Hills (Year 9) and Mr R Doherty (Year 10)

Attendance Officers – Miss A Mockridge

Education Welfare Officer – Wendy Ryan

## ATTENDANCE AND ATTAINMENT FACTS

### Attendance Levels

Attendance levels can sometimes be regarded in the same way as examination results. In an examination, 80% would be a very positive result. However, in attendance terms, that would mean that you missed 40 days of education, just over 1 day per week. Therefore if your attendance remains at 80% for the whole of your secondary education, you will miss more than a full year of education.

### Attendance Rates

95%+ = Excellent chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

92.5% to 94.9% = Fair chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

91.5% = Possible chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

90% = Less than 50% chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

88% = Less than 35% chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

Less than 88% = Less than 30% chance of meeting the required attainment scores at the end of Year 11.

In order for a child to achieve the highest possible grades, he/she must **attend school regularly**.

| Approximate Days Absence in a School Year |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Attendance Rate                           | By End of School Year |
| 100%                                      | 0                     |
| 95%                                       | 10                    |
| 90%                                       | 20                    |
| 85%                                       | 30                    |
| 80%                                       | 40                    |

### Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. Staff are committed to working with parents/carers to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.