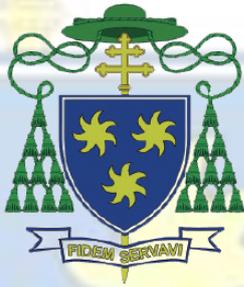


APPROVED



st. Wilfrid's

Catholic High School and Sixth Form College, a Voluntary Academy



Attendance Policy

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POLICY DOCUMENT	Attendance Policy
Legislation: Education/Other	Highly Recommended document for Academy Schools
Lead Member of Staff	Headteacher / Attendance Officer
Lead Governor	
Revision Date	May 2020
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Academy Council	Inclusion/Pastoral
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1 Policy Statement

St Wilfrid's Catholic High School is committed to improving levels of attendance as an integral part of its drive to promote inclusion and raise standards. We believe that a good education supports and challenges students to raise aspirations, wellbeing and attainment.

2 Purpose

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, amended Education Act 2002, 2005 and Education regulations 2006 and 2007, a student is required to attend regularly at the school where s/he is a registered student. The Acts have been updated in June 2013 and statutory legislation came into force in September 2013. We are obliged by law to record and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence and to identify persistent absence. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3 Responsibility

Excellent attendance at St Wilfrid's Catholic High School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – students, parents and staff.

Staff - St Wilfrid's Catholic High School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each student feels safe and secure. All school staff employ a range of strategies and will operate the school's system of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of students with good attendance. The School and staff will challenge and investigate cases of absenteeism and all students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Students - All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually.

Parents - Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, the school will request parents to notify the school on the first day of non-attendance by phone call. A student's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. If parents do not inform school of a return date for their child, parents are expected to contact school on a daily basis with an update. Parents will be informed promptly, by the school, of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. There is also a structured school system of warning letters to inform parents when their child's attendance has fallen below the school target and other attendance thresholds. This operates prior to the Education Welfare Service becoming involved.



Guidance

Parents and students should only plan absences from lessons if there is no alternative. In these circumstances, you will need to contact the attendance officer by telephone or place a note in the Student Planner and provide supporting evidence before the event where possible. Where absences cannot be foreseen in advance the parent or student should let school know as soon as possible on the same day (failure to do so may mean that the absence is not authorised). Where a student needs to leave school early for an appointment then a phone call is required to the Attendance Office.

Authorised Absence

Absence from school *will* be authorised if it is for the reasons listed below –

- Illness.
- Unavoidable Hospital/Orthodontist's appointments that cannot be arranged outside of school hours.
- Relevant Religious Festival.
- Family bereavement
- Attendance at a family funeral.
- A career related/College interview (appointment letter must be provided).
- A Work Experience placement.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may give cause for consideration, such as the number of absences already taken, repetitions of the same excuse and whether students are able to provide suitable evidence.

Parents should liaise with school to authorise their absences.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence from school *will not* be authorised for-

- Holidays during term time (see below).
- Looking after brothers, sisters or sick parents.
- Accompanying family members to appointments.
- Birthdays.
- Shopping.
- Leisure activities.
- Unsatisfactory absence notes.
- Patterns of absence which arouses suspicion after investigation.
- Periods during school or external examinations especially SATs and GCSEs.



Punctuality

School begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school promptly. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, the Attendance Officer will liaise with parents and EWO regarding further action. Persistent lateness without a legitimate reason will be seen as truancy and will be dealt with in the same way.

Holidays

We will make parents aware that they do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. According to the new amendments of the Education Regulations 2006 that were published September 2013, a school cannot grant any leave of absence during term time. Headteachers have the right to grant leave of absence only for exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances then parents need to apply in advance, by letter, to the Headteacher of the school. Any days taken without permission granted from the school will be regarded as unauthorised and may incur Fixed Penalty fines in line with LA guidelines. Parents are asked to be aware that any absence from school is detrimental to a child's education and should, therefore, be avoided if at all possible.

5 Educational Welfare Service

We will work closely with the Education Welfare Service in maintaining high levels of attendance and will look towards the Education Welfare Officer for support in dealing with matters of non-attendance. Where attendance does not improve a Referral process takes place which involves letters, visits, meetings, Fixed Penalty fines and ultimately prosecution. Parents may also be involved in School Parenting Contracts which include attendance and/or LA Parenting Orders which could result in Court action.