

St. Francis Catholic Primary School

Attendance Information for Parents and Carers

If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. The Government now class Persistent Absentees as children who miss 10% of lessons and it is our duty to ensure that we aim for 95% attendance from all of the children at St. Francis School so that your child can receive the best education possible, giving them the best start in their school life. Please read the information below carefully as it will help you to help your child to achieve their very best!

Helpful Hints

- Telephone the school between 8.00am – 9.30am on the first day of your child's absence and everyday thereafter unless you know how long your child will be off, in which case please advise the office staff accordingly with proof from your GP/Hospital. (If no-one responds to your call, please leave a message on the answerphone.)
- If you receive a text from the school, please reply so that we know your child is safe.
- Notify the school, well in advance of any medical appointments, providing evidence such as a letter or appointment card from the hospital, GP, dentist etc.
- Respond to school enquiries about unexplained absence as quickly as possible, otherwise the absence will be unauthorised.
- Keep us well informed of any on-going medical conditions your child has that may affect their attendance
- Make sure you have alternative arrangements for a friend or relative to get your child to school in an emergency.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, bring them anyway (unless they've been vomiting or have had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours). They often perk up during the day, but we will contact you if they do not.
- If your child has a well-known childhood illness, contact the school for advice on recovery time. We have all the up-to-date information. E.g. chicken pox, measles etc.

Authorised Absence

Only the Head teachers can authorise absence.

Absences will not be authorised if, for example:

- Another member of the family is ill
- The family have overslept or had a late night (it is better they come a little late than not attend at all)
- There are problems with uniform/clothing
- You have forgotten school dates
- Your child attends a medical/dental appointment for more than half a day without written proof that this is necessary
- There is an annual family event such as a birthday
- There is bad weather and the school is still open

Requesting Holidays

The Government now advise schools not to authorise absence for holidays in term time. Therefore, at this school, all requests for holidays in term time will be denied. If you choose to still take the holiday then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

If the holiday is 10 sessions (5 whole school days) or more, you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child (with a possibility of rising to £120 if the fine is not paid on time).

If you wish to request leave due to special circumstances, you must complete a Leave of Absence Form. Your request will be then be considered by the Head teachers.

Attendance Meetings

Attendance is monitored regularly in school. At the end of each term, the parents/carers or any child whose attendance is 90% or less, or is close to being this low, will be asked to attend an Attendance Meeting with the Head teachers. This meeting allows us to see if there are any reasons why your child might have poor attendance and what the school can do to help.

If attendance doesn't improve then parents will be asked to attend another meeting with the Governors and an Officer from Southwark's Education, Welfare and Attendance team.(EWAS.)

The School Day Starts At 8.55am

It is disruptive to your child and other children in the class if your child arrives to school late so please arrive in school between 8.47am and 8.55am. If your child arrives in school after 8.55am they will be marked as 'late'. If they arrive after 9.30am it will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Please contact the school if you know that your child will be late e.g. traffic jams etc.

Lateness may also be referred to the Education Welfare and Attendance Officer and can provide grounds for prosecution.

Lateness