



# **Pupil Attendance Policy**

# St Therese of Lisieux Primary School

## PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

St Therese of Lisieux will strive to promote a nurturing ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

### Mission Statement

*The Governors and staff of St Therese of Lisieux Primary School, are committed to providing our pupils with a positive attitude towards Catholic education. Christ's values and gospel message are an intrinsic part of our ethos, daily running of the school and our curriculum. We try to ensure that we work in partnership with the home, parish and the wider community to strengthen our pupils' vision of their role as part of the Catholic community.*

*'With a smile and a helping hand we inspire the children of today*

*to become the adults of tomorrow.*

### Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Therese of Lisieux school.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

### Role of the School

The Principal at St Therese of Lisieux has overall responsibility for school attendance; staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Attendance Circular, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/23%2024%20Academic%20Year%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20and%20Absence%20Recording%20By%20Schools.pdf>

St Therese of Lisieux PS is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note/Dojo message when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

Medical appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If medical appointments have to be made during the school day pupils should be in school before/after the appointment when possible.

Family holidays should not be taken during the school term.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at St Therese of Lisieux must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return. If something is preventing you from attending school you must tell an adult.

### **Absence Procedures**

All Parents/Guardians are required to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note/Dojo message when the pupil returns to school. If a child has a medical condition that hinders regular attendance medical evidence may be requested.

### **Family Holidays During Term Time**

St Therese of Lisieux PS discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in extremely exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

### **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note/Dojo message when the pupil returns to school. If no reasons have been provided for absences teachers will contact parents. Where necessary they will discuss the detrimental impact on learning that erratic or prolonged absences create and provide parents with a copy of 'School Attendance Matters: A Parent's Guide' and/or 'Miss School Miss Out'. These DE publications are available online at:-

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/attendance-matters-a-parents-guide.pdf>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/miss-school%3Dmiss-out-english-June%202021.pdf>

If attendance does not improve a letter will be sent to parents informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if there is no improvement the parents will receive a second letter informing them of the school's continued concern and inviting them to a meeting to discuss any issues. It will be stated in this letter that if attendance continues to be a problem, the school will be required to formally refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Service.

If attendance does not improve or parents do not respond to the letter/attend the meeting, a member of staff will speak to the parent about the matter when they are dropping off or collecting the child or attending another meeting at the school eg annual parent teacher consultation.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed regularly and provide information to assist the school to strategically manage attendance issues.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority, through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will make regular visits to the school throughout the year to audit and discuss attendance concerns and to offer advice and support if necessary.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. The EWS has access to attendance information through the schools' SIMS system and will use the reports to support their role. EWS will

support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

**Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing**

As part of the school's monitoring and evaluation process, we continually keep abreast of new initiatives and circulars and adapt our practice accordingly. Therefore, this policy will be reviewed by the Principal on an annual basis.

## **Appendices**

1. Absence Notification Form



**ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM**

**Please Note – This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.**

**Name of Pupil** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class / Teacher Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Absence** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed (Parent / Guardian)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_