



Our Lady & St. Edward Primary & Nursery  
Catholic Voluntary Academy



St Patrick's Catholic Primary and Nursery School,  
A Voluntary Academy



St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School:  
a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Blessed Robert Widmerpool  
Catholic Voluntary Academy



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## **1. CORE PRINCIPLES**

South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all students. The trust sincerely believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the trust will do as much as it can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any issues, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Student performance and well-being go hand in hand. Students can't learn if they don't feel safe or if ill health problems are allowed to create barriers. South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust fully embraces the five strands of the every child matters agenda and uses these to inform decisions when dealing with young people.

The law states that parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure that children within their care attend school regularly. Schools and the local authority have a duty to ensure that poor school attendance is dealt with swiftly.

Local authorities have legal enforcement powers under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 to bring legal action against parents in order to enforce attendance at school.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy received the full agreement of the executive board and was agreed at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013

## **3. AIMS**

**The South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust recognises that;**

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

- Situations beyond the control of pupils, parents or carers may impact on attendance. We will, with agreement and support of parent/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their society.

#### **4. EXPECTATIONS**

##### **We expect the following from parents/carers;**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To ensure that they contact their children's school on the first morning of absence whenever their children are unable to attend, as appropriate. This should always be the first day of absence and everyday thereafter until the child returns to school
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework
- To contact their children's school whenever any problem occurs that may affect performance
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending

##### **We expect the following from all our pupils;**

- That they attend school regularly
- That they will be on time and be appropriately equipped for the day.

##### **Parents and students can expect the following from The South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust;**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a reason
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us
- Rewarding good attendance
- A quality education
- Education welfare officer working across the academy trust to provide support, advice and guidance to students, parents and carers for all aspects of school attendance

## **5. ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL**

### **Attendance is encouraged in the following ways**

- Accurate completion of registers in school
- Attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording of good attendance on individual progress reports
- Education welfare officer working across the academy to identify and provide support, advice and guidance to pupils and their families who have attendance issues in the feeder primary school as part of any transition work between KS2 and KS3
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents and carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty attending, including home visits by the education welfare officer if necessary
- An efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the academy
- Sending parents termly/weekly absence figures as appropriate including positive letters of encouragement
- An 'improved attendance' award for any students showing a significant improvement in attendance, as appropriate
- Celebrating outstanding attendance during achievement assemblies every half term in school, as appropriate

## **6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

The academy trust has a structured response for dealing with attendance concerns. When attendance falls below the expected level of 96.5% close monitoring will be put in place.

We will communicate our concerns with parents/carers if attendance falls below our expected levels. This may be in writing, by telephone or in person.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

The academy trust employs an education welfare officer who works with families to overcome any barriers that may be preventing a student from attending regularly.

### **Attendance panels**

Parents of students with poor attendance may be invited to attend an Attendance Panel. This may include a variety of professionals involved with student welfare. The aim of this meeting is to improve future attendance and prevent the need for referral to targeted support to begin legal processes.

## **7. PUNCTUALITY**

The importance of arriving at school on time

- Arriving late at school may cause embarrassment for the child
- Pupils' arriving late is disruptive, not only to their own learning but the learning of others.
- Pupils may miss something important such as lesson plans or instructions on how to complete a piece of work
- Lateness can affect how students form friendship groups. Social interaction with peers before school is important.
- Pupils are marked present. The register is not only a legal document it also provides evidence that pupils have arrived in school and are safe.
- Punctuality shows reliability and is a valuable attribute for future working life. Future employers, universities and colleges look for reliability. A good record of attendance and punctuality is an indication of this and they may request to see it.

Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be marked with a 'U' code. Persistent lateness is dealt with locally by schools within the academy trust. It is part of the academy trust policy that all registers close at 9.15am.

This is recorded as an unauthorised late arrival. It is important to note that this will mean a full session of absence is recorded on the register and therefore has an impact on a pupil's overall attendance figure.

Parents should inform the school preferably before school opens, giving the reason for the absence. This can be communicated by telephone, personal message or letter from the parent/carer. We cannot accept a verbal message from a child. If we do not receive a message the absence will be unauthorised.

## **8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

The academy trust will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each school within the trust will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is **not a parental right**. In accordance with government guidelines, the application must be made 12 days in advance by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from individual schools within the academy trust by request. The head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave.

**The South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust may agree a 'leave of absence' in exceptional circumstances such as:**

- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

**The South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust will not agree a 'leave of absence in circumstances such as:**

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.

Leave of absence that has not been approved will therefore be unauthorised and may lead to a referral being made to the local authority for action.

Penalties are set at £60.00 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is paid, the absence covered by the Penalty Notice cannot be cited again. Failure to pay will result in prosecution under Section 444, Education Act 1996.

## **9. WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES WHEN APPROPRIATE**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed. .

There are the many support services we can work with to improve the outcomes for our students

- Faith in Families
- Targeted Support.
- Educational Psychologists.
- School health
- Social care.
- Youth Offending Team.
- Police.
- CAMHS

### **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard to the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Implemented on: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Reviewed on: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Approved by Executive Board: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015

Next review date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

