

Cardinal Newman Catholic School

Attendance Policy

Cardinal Newman prides itself on the motto 'Caritas' and in order for this motto to live in the community it is vital that students commit to the community. One of the key issues with community involvement is attendance which plays a vital impact on the ability of students to take full advantage of the opportunities open to them.

Irregular attendance places students outside this caring community undermining the education process. This leads to educational disadvantage and can place students at risk, possibly being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

To ensure regular student attendance, legal powers were given to Local Authorities in the Education Act 1996, to enforce where necessary school attendance.

We recognise that for the vast majority of our students, good school attendance is a well established habit which brings students success. However, it is important that all parents understand clearly their responsibilities for their child's attendance and the consequences for them should they fail to ensure this.

- Regular school attendance.
- Children arrive at school on time, at 8.40am, properly attired and in a condition to learn.
- To inform the school of the reason for a child's absence by note, personal contact or telephone call. The school will then decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.
- Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.

- Only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise absence. The fact that a parent has offered a note in relation to a particular absence does not oblige the school to accept the explanation.
- Parents will be informed of the percentage attendance on all reports.
- Parents will be informed regularly if their child's attendance is causing concern.
- We would recommend that families do not take holidays in term time. However, in exceptional circumstances the school can give permission for up to two weeks leave of absence but not during the examination period. A leave of absence form is required for all absence requests.

Promoting Good Attendance

The school values good attendance and where students are achieving very high attendance they will be rewarded by commendations in the award assemblies on a term basis.

Liaison with Feeder Schools

Detailed information and data is collected on all students as they transfer to Cardinal Newman. Where there has been a history of poor attendance in the past, strategies and support will be put in place to monitor and improve attendance patterns.

Third Day Call Procedures

If a student is absent and the school has not received an explanation by note or telephone call, the school will telephone home on the third day to check. This is designed in the interests of the personal safety of students as well as to encourage attendance. It is the Form Tutor's responsibility, initially, to ask students to provide information on absence. Where this information is not forthcoming a series of letters are

sent home to account for this absence. Initially the information is requested by the Form Tutor then Pastoral Leader followed by the Acting Deputy Headteacher. If this information is not forthcoming the school will not authorise the absence and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.

Leave of Absence Requests

Unless there are special circumstances Cardinal Newman will not normally authorise leave of absence during term time. All leave of absence applications must be made at least two weeks in advance on the appropriate leave of absence form. Students with less than the school attendance target will not have the leave of absence authorised regardless of reason. A leave of absence request form must be completed prior to the leave of absence being taken, failure to do this will result in the leave of absence being unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice being issued. Any leave of absence taken without authorisation will be referred to the EWO who will make an informed decision on the circumstances as to whether a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' is to be issued.

We are not obliged to authorise holidays in term time, there is no automatic entitlement in law for time off school to go on holiday. Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Monitoring of Attendance

The school will carefully monitor all student attendance via the Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Attendance Officer and EWO.

Tracking Letters

If a student's attendance falls below the targeted figure an 'Attendance Tracking 1' letter will be sent home. This letter informs parents of the percentage attendance and that if there is no improvement the school will not authorise any further absences. Parents are invited to discuss any issues with the school. If attendance continues to be a problem the 'Attendance Tracking 2' letter will be sent which informs parents of their child's attendance and that the school will not authorise any more absence without medical confirmation from the doctor. If the student's attendance fails to improve after the Attendance Tracking 2 the Pastoral Leader will invite the parents into school. If they fail to improve after the Pastoral Leader's meeting they will be referred to the EWO. The EWO will invite the parents to an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM). The Parent, Pastoral Leader and the student attend this meeting. A contract of 100% Attendance Target is set and signed by all those present at the 'ASM'. In the next 4 weeks the EWO reviews the student's attendance.

After failure to comply with the 100% target agreed at the ASM or failure to attend an ASM, the EWO will send a 'warning letter' which advises them that they, the parents, could be liable to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Each student referred to the EWO is reviewed regularly, relevant action is taken and letters are sent with review dates set.

If attendance improves, parents are removed from tracking, then an 'Attendance Tracking 3' letter is sent home informing parents there has been improvements and congratulating them for their effort. Tracking is reviewed every two weeks.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they fall below 80% attendance at any time in the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached or is at risk of moving towards the PA mark is given priority. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our 'tracking procedure'. All PA cases are also automatically dealt with by the EWO.

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage if their child is experiencing difficulty in attending school and to work with the staff in resolving the problems together.

Fixed Penalty Notices on Lates and Term Time Holidays

Fixed penalties will be issued by the EWO on:

20 Sessions Unauthorised Holiday and

10 Sessions Unauthorised Lateness in 10 weeks

20 Sessions Unauthorised Holiday

Once a letter has been sent by the Acting Deputy Headteacher to advise that the request for absence has been unauthorised the EWO is notified. The EWO will then issue both parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

10 Sessions Unauthorised Lateness in 10 weeks

When a student reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness in a 10 week period the EWO is notified. The EWO will then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to both parents.

Each student referred to the EWO is reviewed regularly, relevant action is taken and letters are sent with review dates set.

Parenting Contracts

Where there is a history of poor attendance and students have not responded to a fixed penalty notice, parenting contracts will be set up by the EWO. Strategies will be discussed to enable the students to improve their attendance. Where attendance is still an issue the EWO will resort to action through the Courts.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter misses the start of the day they can miss work and may miss vital information and news for the day delivered by their Form Tutor. Students who arrive late also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage further absence. There is also an administrative burden on the school.

Students who arrive late but before the close of the 9.00am Registration should register with their Form Tutor as normal. If they arrive after this time they must report to Records to be signed in. If the student does not have a note from the parents/carers explaining the lateness or if this note is not satisfactory, a detention will be issued during break time. Arrival after 9.30 am will be recorded as 'Unauthorised Lateness' unless we have a letter from the parent stating a satisfactory reason for lateness. Where a student is persistently late, the Pastoral Leader will inform the parents via a 'Tracking Lateness 1' letter which informs them we will monitor their lateness. If their punctuality fails to improve 'Tracking Lateness 2' letters will be issued, this informs the parents that any future lates will be unauthorised. If during a '10 week period' there are 10 sessions unauthorised late a 'fixed penalty referral' will be sent to the EWO.

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