



St. Walburga's Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers

Attendance News

As we have started a new academic year, I want to remind our existing families and inform our new families, that have joined us this term, about the attendance expectations at St. Walburga's. Additionally, I would like to share our latest attendance news.

At the end of the academic year 2024/25, we exceeded our 96% whole school attendance target and **reached 96.53%**. We are delighted to have achieved this, and every single year group also reached this target! Thank you for your ongoing support in making sure your children attend school regularly – it makes a real difference to their progress and enjoyment of learning. Regular attendance and good punctuality are key to helping every child thrive both academically and socially. We would also like to celebrate the fact that 23 children across the school were able to come to school every day throughout the whole academic year!

Here is a breakdown of our whole school attendance by year group:

| Year Group (July 2025) | Attendance | Absence by no. of sessions | | No. of Lates |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | Authorised | Unauthorised | |
| Reception | 96.40% | 633 | 151 | 136 |
| Year 1 | 96.79% | 575 | 130 | 257 |
| Year 2 | 96.48% | 686 | 98 | 207 |
| Year 3 | 96.40% | 680 | 139 | 243 |
| Year 4 | 96.59% | 649 | 128 | 156 |
| Year 5 | 96.46% | 668 | 126 | 138 |
| Year 6 | 96.61% | 651 | 121 | 57 |
| Whole School | 96.53% | 4542 | 893 | 1194 |

While we celebrate our overall attendance success, there are still some areas where we would like to work together to improve, for the year ahead, such as reducing unauthorised absences and improving punctuality.

It's important to keep in mind that the government has stated that the expected attendance for a child at school is 96% or greater. This means that each child should aim to have no more than 7.5 days of absence in a complete academic year. It might be tempting to think that missing a day or two won't make a difference, but the table below shows how even a small percentage of absence can add up to a significant amount of lost learning hours by the end of the academic year.

| Description | Attendance | Whole days absent over the academic year | Lost hours of learning over the academic year |
|----------------------|------------|--|---|
| Excellent | 100% - 99% | 0 - 2 | 0-10 |
| Good | 98% - 96% | 4 – 7.5 | 20 – 37.5 |
| Requires improvement | 95% - 91% | 9.5 - 17 | 47.5 - 85 |
| Persistent Absentee | 90% - 86% | 19 – 27 | 95 - 135 |
| Critical | 85% - 80% | 28.5 – 38 | 142.5 - 190 |

Not only are learning hours lost, but also opportunities for social interaction, school trips, visitors to school and time spent with friends are missed. Of course, it's important to prioritise a child's health and well-being, so it's understandable if they need to stay home when they're really unwell. However, it can be challenging sometimes for parents to determine when their child is too ill to attend school. This is why I recommend you look at the useful tool in the link below, which

offers advice to help you make that decision. Don't forget, children can come to school if they are on antibiotics, if they are well enough, you just need to complete a request form for us to administer medication in school, which you will find in the School Office and on our school website.

<https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool>

Lateness

Children who arrive late in school not only miss valuable settling-in time and directions for the first lesson but may also find that their lateness contributes towards their attendance percentage. All children must be in school by 8.40am at the latest. Our gates open at 8.25am, giving you a 15-minute window to drop your children to school on time.

The gates close promptly at 8.40am, when the bell goes, therefore if you arrive at school late, you will need to access the school via the office. A member of the office staff will sign your child in and will ask you for the reason for your child's late arrival at school. Late arrivals to school between 8.40am and 9.10am will be marked as 'late' on the registers. Arrivals to school after 9.10am will be marked down as an 'unauthorised absence'. This type of absence may lead to outside agencies becoming involved with the family to offer help if it happens regularly.

Our school day ends at 2.50pm and children should be collected promptly. If there is an occasion where you are unexpectedly running late, you must phone the School Office to let us know, and if you are going to be more than 15 minutes late you should make other arrangements for someone else to collect your child so they are not waiting at the office. Children do feel unsettled and anxious when they are collected late. It is not acceptable for you to collect your child late regularly. If we notice this happening we will speak to parents to find out more about the situation.

Unexpected Absence

Please contact the school on 01202 528811 by no later than 9.00am to report your child absent. You will need to do this each day they do not attend. If your child needs a significant amount of time off for illness, we may ask for medical evidence to support their absence.

Holidays/Absence in Term Time

Please remember that the Government has forbidden absence in term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Should you need to take your child out of school for any reason, please consider the impact it will have on their learning, progress and what they might miss before you request a leave of absence. Any **requests must be made in writing to me at least 10 school days in advance**. Exceptions to this 10-school day requirement would include, but not be limited to, bereavements, funerals etc, at our discretion.

Holidays in term time cannot be authorised and as you will be aware, unauthorised absence will result in us having to refer you to the Local Authority whereby they will issue a penalty notice (fine) to both parents or, in some cases, a prosecution. You can find additional information regarding penalty notices on our school website and within our attendance policy.

Your Child's Attendance

It's always important to keep track of your child's attendance throughout the academic year. Parents are informed of their child's attendance level at the end of each term. This information is published on your child's report card at the end of the Autumn Term and Spring Term, and their final report in the Summer Term. It's a great way to stay informed and see if your child is on target.

If at any point in the year we have concerns about your child's attendance we will get in touch with you either by phone or by letter, particularly if your child's attendance falls below 90% and into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. Our primary goal is to notify you if your child's attendance level has fallen below expected and to determine if there is anything you or your child requires support with. Each child and family are treated as individuals and we really value having open conversations regarding pupil attendance, attitudes to school, and children's wellbeing.

If you have any concerns about attendance or punctuality, or if you are facing challenges that are making it difficult for your child to attend regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us. You are more than welcome to speak to your child's class teacher; Mrs Symes, our Pastoral Support Worker; Miss Prince from the School Office; Miss McKinley, our Inclusion Leader and SENCo, Mrs Crutchley, our Deputy Head; or myself. Our children's well-being and education are of utmost importance to us and our whole school team works together to support families to ensure that children attend school regularly, so they can reach their full potential. Thank you for working with us.

Yours sincerely



Veronica Woodward
Headteacher