



## St. Michael's Catholic Primary Academy & Nursery

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Principal Mrs. C. Williams

09 September 2014

Dear Parents

### School Attendance, Late Arrivals at the Academy and Leave of Absence in Term Time

I am sure that as parents you agree that education is extremely important and that missing school means that your child is missing out on the education that he/she needs. It is important then that children should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. If children are absent from school without a good reason this becomes an offence and parents could face legal action that will be taken by the Local Education Authority.

#### Leave of Absence in Term Time

From 01 September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations changed the rules about holidays taken during term time. With effect from September 2013 Head Teachers/Principals may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

In the case of our own Academy, exceptional circumstances would be considered as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. As these new regulations that came into effect on 01 September 2013 are enshrined in law it is important that all schools and academies adhere to them and it will no longer be acceptable for any Head Teacher to accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time. In some cases, a parent's employer might restrict holiday to a certain time period. In these circumstances the Head Teacher may ask for written confirmation from the employer. When a child's average attendance is below 95% it is unlikely that any further absence can be authorised. Important significant family situations and emergency events will be considered based on the reasons for any requests made for absence during term time.

#### Penalties for Unauthorised Absence

Parents should be informed that the Government have also made amendments to the Penalty Notice Regulations that can be applied for unauthorised absences. These amendments also came into force on 01 September 2013. The original 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices to each parent who fails to ensure his/her children's regular attendance at school. With effect from September 2013 the penalty fine is £60.00 which must be paid within 21 days or £120.00 if the fine is paid within 28 days. The Government sees that these changes to the regulations brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. During the last academic year we have had occasion to forward a small number of cases of absence in term time to the Local Authority to be issued with Penalty Notices. We do, however, recognise that the majority of parents appreciate that the law has now changed and no longer request any leave to be granted in term time.

In the light of the changes to these legal attendance regulations parents are reminded of the actions that should be taken if for any reason your child is absent from school and other information relating to attendance and punctuality at our school:

#### Re. Pupil Absence from the Academy

**Should your child be absent from the Academy, we request that you contact us on the first day that the absence occurs. When your child is able to return to school please send a letter stating the dates of the absence and the reason**

**PTO**

Bishop Cleary Catholic Multi Academy Company, a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (company number 08578428) whose registered office address is Compton Park, Wolverhampton, WV3 9DU



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Let the Children Come to Me



To Love and Serve the Lord

*why your child was unable to attend the Academy. If this information is not received the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Thank you for your co-operation in informing us of the reason for your child's absence as soon as absence occurs.*

### **Re. School use of text messaging service**

If school administrators have not heard about the reason for your child's absence on the first day of absence, you may be contacted via the text messaging service asking you to ring in with the reason for your child's absence from school. Please do contact school with any change of mobile numbers, home telephone numbers, etc., in order that we know that you can be contacted by the school, not only in this instance but also in case we need to contact you if your child is ill or there is some emergency. Thank you.

### **Pupils arriving on school site**

May I remind parents that teaching staff are not responsible for the care and welfare of pupils on school site until **8.45 a.m.** when staff are officially on duty.

The school bell is rung at 8.55 a.m. and this bell signals the start of the school day. It would be appreciated if parents can ensure that children arrive between 8.45 and 8.55 a.m. to ensure that children are ready to enter class and lessons can commence on time.

Once the school bell has been rung the gate will be locked. Any children who are not in the playground should enter the school via the main school entrance. Children who arrive late will have their names entered in the late arrival book. Parents are informed that all registers will close at 9.15 a.m. Any pupil arriving after 9.15 a.m., unless for a good reason such as having a medical appointment or for extraordinary circumstances that have occurred that morning will have no registration mark recorded. These attendance practices are in accordance with Local Education Authority attendance guidelines and are being implemented in schools across the authority in the aim of improving attendance and punctuality.

### **Collecting Children at the Close of the School Day**

During the last academic year there were a number of occasions where parents did not collect children on time at the close of the school day. If for any reason, parents are going to be unavoidably late in collecting your children, please telephone the Academy in order to inform us of your situation so that we can alert the class teacher of your late arrival and also reassure your child that you are on your way to collect them. Mrs Williams may ask to meet with parents who are frequently late in arriving to collect their children promptly at 3.15 pm without prior arrangement.

### **School Attendance Certificates**

For children who have a 100% attendance rate during the term, attendance certificates will be awarded.

### **Class Attendance Rewards**

Each week in Golden Assembly the class with the highest attendance percentage will be awarded with the school 'attendance bear'. The attendance bear will also carry an additional reward:- the winning class will qualify for an extra 15 minutes playtime during the week.

In addition to this, the class with second place attendance percentage will be rewarded with 10 minutes extra playtime, and third place 5 minutes extra playtime.

We feel this will be an exciting challenge for all pupils and really help us to improve our attendance rate.

School attendance is important. Let us continue to work together to improve our attendance rate and ensure that our pupils arrive at school in time and ready to address the educational challenges that await them each day.

Yours sincerely

C Williams  
Principal

