



Loreto Convent School

Gibraltar

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the ethos of Loreto Convent School and has been compiled and reviewed with the involvement of children, staff and Governors.

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that children maximise their entitlement to education by promoting attendance at school. Loreto Convent School is involved actively in monitoring attendance, thus seeking to promote and to improve attendance.

Ensuring school attendance is a key component of the partnership between home and school. Once a child becomes a registered pupil it is a parental duty to ensure attendance at school. The school is accountable for the levels of attendance by the pupils in order to ensure that the children's right to education is not overlooked.

1 Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence.
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance.
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school.

2 Principles

- 2.1 Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved.
- 2.2 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- 2.3 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (i.e. illness or other unavoidable cause).
- 2.4 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily,

truancy, unapproved holidays in term time, attendance at events not agreed by the school and any absences which have not been properly explained.

2.5 Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend it is never better to give in to pressure to excuse attendance. Parents should contact their child's teacher, aiming to work together with the staff to resolve problems.

2.6 Loreto Convent School recognises that it must inform the local authority if any child is deleted from the attendance registers where they are said to be being educated at home, have been certified as medically unfit to attend school, have been permanently excluded, or other circumstance giving concern. We have a duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age and who are missing education are followed up to avoid risk of abuse.

3 Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

3.1 Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact their class teacher via admin@loreto.gi on the first day of absence. This will be verified by contact from home, by telephone or by e-mail. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of illness (such as a doctor's note) may be requested.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will not normally authorise absences unless they are caused by unavoidable circumstances.

3.2 Holidays

All holiday leave in term time is to be discouraged, as it disrupts academic progress and places children at a disadvantage. The school has long holiday periods and parents are asked to use these published vacation times.

Any holiday leave in term time is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Provided the request is made in advance in writing, leave for up to 10 days per school year may be granted, provided the child's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory. Leave may be refused where a child has already missed a lot of work or at crucial times of the year (eg during exams). In general, the school would wish to discourage such requests, but recognises that exceptional circumstances may occur.

3.3 Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is avoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Late arrival during the registration period will be denoted with the code L. Awareness of patterns of lateness is vital in discouraging slippage and getting prompt attendance.

4 Promoting Attendance

- 4.1 Loreto Convent School is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Children are registered at the start of morning school and the start of afternoon school. The class teacher informs the Headteacher of any significant trends in attendance, giving attention to improvement as well as problems.
- 4.2 Praise and more tangible rewards can be used to reward 100% attendance and improved attendance.
- 4.3 Figures on attendance (for the individual child) and comments from tutors on attendance can form part of the reporting procedure to parents.
- 4.4 Parent-teacher interviews provide an opportunity to meet to discuss any problems of attendance.
- 4.5 If a child is absent and no message is received from the child's parents, telephone contact must be made with the parent within two days and email follow up if no response to telephone call.
- 4.6 In the event of absence beyond a few days, parents should contact the class teacher who will arrange for work to be set for the child to complete at home.

5 General Principles

The benefits of pupil attendance are maximised through a sound teaching programme and careful control of disruption to classes. This document explains the process for protecting teaching time whilst allowing a rich variety of activities to occur.

- a. Lessons are vital. Absences from lessons should be, therefore, rare and approved only after thorough consideration. Absences are not agreed lightly by the Headteacher, one of whose chief responsibilities is for the overall academic progress and success of the school and its members.
- b. Requests for absences, therefore, need to be justified and, if turned down by the Headteacher, the balance of factors in making a decision needs to be appreciated.

Seen by Governing Body: