A Parent Guide to School Attendance

St. Clare's Catholic Primary School

A message from us

At St. Clare's, we know that every child's journey is different, and that family life can sometimes make school attendance challenging for you,

We also know something very clearly: **when children are in school every day, they feel more confident, learn more and are happier and more settled in school.**

We see this every day in our classrooms and playgrounds.

This short guide explains how we support attendance, what we ask of families, and what happens if attendance becomes a concern. Most importantly, it explains how we will always work with you to support your child.

Why coming to school every day matters

When your child comes to school regularly, they:

- settle into routines that help them feel safe and ready to learn
- build friendships and feel part of school life
- learn in small steps without missing important learning
- grow in confidence and independence

When children miss school, they can find it harder to keep up in lessons, feel less confident in class and feel less connected with their friends.

We understand that children may be off school from time to time. What matters most is that we stay in close contact and work together so that their attendance does not become a concern.

Promoting good attendance

At St. Clare's, we actively promote attendance every day.

We do this by:

- welcoming children warmly each morning so they feel they belong
- making sure school is a safe, positive and happy place to be
- talking with children about why coming to school matters
- celebrating good and improved attendance
- keeping families informed so you always know how your child is doing
- contacting you early if we notice any worries or patterns

We want children to feel proud of coming to school every day. We want you to feel proud of your child's attendance too!

What we ask from families

We ask for your support with a few simple but really important things:

- please send your child to school every day unless they are genuinely unwell
- please make sure they arrive on time
- please contact us on the first morning if your child is absent

- please avoid holidays during term time
- please talk to us early if attendance or punctuality becomes difficult for you as a family

We will always work with you, you are not on your own.

School times and the school day

To help your child have the best start to the day, please see our school timings below:

- **School gates open: 8.40am**
- **School day starts at: 8.50am**
- **Registration closes: 9.20am Arriving after this time will mean your child is recorded as an absence**
- **Afternoon registration: 1.00pm**
- **School day ends: 3.00 pm EYFS - Year 2 and 3.10pm Year 3 – Year 6**

Children are expected to remain in school for the full school day unless we have agreed otherwise.

Arriving on time is really important, it helps children to quickly settle and to feel ready for learning.

Contacting us about absence

If your child is going to be absent, please let us know on the first morning.

You can contact us:

- **Phone: 0121 554 3289**
- **Email: enquiry@stclare.bham.sch.uk**

Please include:

- your child's name
- reason for absence
- expected return date (if known)

If we do not hear from you, we will contact you. This is part of our responsibility to keep children safe.

If your child is unwell

We know it can be difficult to decide whether your child should stay at home.

As a guide:

- **Fever/high temperature:** children should stay at home until better
- **Vomiting or diarrhoea:** children should stay off for 48 hours after symptoms stop
- **Mild coughs and colds:** children can usually attend if they feel well

If your child has a minor condition such as head lice or a cold sore, they can usually still come to school.

If you are unsure, please contact us, we are always happy to advise.

Appointments

Where possible, please arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

If this is not possible:

- please let us know in advance
- provide evidence if requested

- keep time out of school as short as possible

We expect children to attend before and after appointments where appropriate.

Holidays during term time

We understand how important family time is and how expensive family holidays are in school holiday period.

However, term-time holidays are not allowed unless the circumstances are truly exceptional. This is because children miss important learning and routines that are difficult to catch up on.

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance (usually at least one month).

Unauthorised holidays may result in a penalty notice and if repeated further legal action.

If you need to request leave during term time, please:

- complete a **Leave of Absence Request Form** (available from the school office or school website)
- submit the request at least **one month in advance** wherever possible
- include full details of the reason for the request and dates required
- wait for written confirmation from the school before making any arrangements

Please do not assume a request has been approved until you receive confirmation from the school.

When attendance becomes a concern

If your child starts to miss school regularly, we will always try to support you early.

We follow three steps:

1. Early contact

We will speak with you to understand what is happening and how we can help.

2. Attendance support

If needed, we will agree a simple plan together to help improve attendance.

3. Further support

If attendance does not improve, we may need to involve Birmingham City Council and legal action. This is always a last step and only happens when support has not led to improvement.

Our aim is always to work with you first.

Understanding attendance

Even small amounts of absence can add up quickly:

- **95% attendance** = around 2 weeks, 10 days or approximately **40 lessons missed** in a year
- **90% attendance** = around 4 weeks, 20 days or approximately **80 lessons missed** in a year
- **Below 90%** = significant loss of school time

We will always let you know early if we are concerned.

Our expectation is that children attend school at least **97% of the time**. This is the equivalent of around **6 days of absence across the whole school year, or about 2 days per term**.

Of course, our real aim is even higher than this. We want every child to be in school **every day, 100% of the time**, so they do not miss out on any of their learning or school experience.

Being on time

Being on time to school is really important for it helps your child:

- start the day calmly
- feel settled and ready to learn
- avoid missing important learning

Even regular small delays can add up to a lot of missed learning over the year.

If your child arrives after the register closes, this may be recorded as an absence.

When attendance is affected by other factors

We understand that some children may find attending school more difficult due to:

- anxiety or worries about school
- medical needs or long-term illness
- additional learning needs
- family circumstances or difficulties at home

If this is the case, please talk to us. We will listen and work with you to put the right support in place.

Keeping children safe

If a child is not attending school and we are unable to contact families, we may need to take further steps to ensure the child is safe. This may include home visits or contacting other agencies.

This is always done with care and with your child's wellbeing as our priority.

We are here to help

If you have any concerns about attendance or punctuality, please contact us as early as possible.

School Attendance Champion: Mrs. V. Rivett

Our Attendance Team: Mrs. S. Rogers, Mrs. L. Whitehouse, Mr. A. Hepburn

Phone/email: 0121 554 3289 or enquiry@stclare.bham.sch.uk

When you contact us, we will:

- listen carefully
- try to understand what is making attendance difficult
- work with you to find solutions
- support your child to attend regularly

We want every child to feel happy, safe, and able to succeed in school.

Please note: This is a summary guide to help parents understand attendance expectations. Our full Attendance Policy, which contains more detailed information, can be found on the school website. St. Clare's Catholic Primary School - Admissions