

February 2024

## Safeguarding Updates – Attendance and Safeguarding



The careful monitoring of attendance is key to improving the overall performance of pupil outcomes, but it is equally important in **keeping children safe** at Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School.

Knowing who is absent and why, is fundamental to effective safeguarding. **Non-Attendance to school or unauthorised attendance, can result in safeguarding action.** This is because persistent absenteeism and sudden changes in patterns of attendance and pupil behaviour, are a key indication that something is wrong and could lead to sudden extended absences. As a school, we have a duty of care to take action.

We therefore scrutinise pupil absence, investigate the reasons for this and ensure our procedures are followed. For example:

- Children who become withdrawn, or who start acting differently in class and who are then absent, would be flagged as a safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Leads and investigated.
- Absences may well be due to illness, but they could equally be linked to safeguarding issues such as bullying, family break-ups, domestic abuse, involvement in county lines or online grooming.

**Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is unwell, the school office should be contacted by 9.00 a.m. The school will make the decision whether attendance will be authorised and reserve the right to request medical information from the GP.** Absence from school can be an indication that a pupil is experiencing more complex issues either on a personal level, in school, in the wider community or in the family home. Pupils may experience mental health concerns, child abuse, bullying and/or exploitation and these issues can become a barrier to regular school attendance.

It is widely accepted that there is a correlation between high levels of attendance and high levels of attainment. Children who attend school regularly can access the full curriculum, develop good social skills, form good patterns of attendance and punctuality and are able to learn skills that will support them throughout life.

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated, 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC has cited, '**failure to ensure regular school attendance which prevents the child reaching their full potential academically**' as one of their six forms of neglect.

Educational neglect, persistent and severe absence are recurring themes in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In contrast, regular school attendance is a protective factor for the most vulnerable children and young people, providing opportunities for support whilst giving them the best possible start in life.

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Research shows associations between regular absence from school and extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

If you feel a child is at risk (suffering harm, neglect or abuse) Any member of the public can contact Careline on 0151 233 3700 or Merseyside Police on 0151 709 6010.

## ***HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?***

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Days Absent</b>	<b>Weeks Absent</b>	<b>Lessons Missed</b>
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	250 lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	290 lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	340 lessons



**EVERY SCHOOL  
DAY COUNTS!**

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