

# St. John's C of E Primary School



## Policy for Attendance

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## Attendance Policy

### Mission and Vision Statement

Each of us is special; each of us is unique.

We aim to provide pupils with high quality teaching and learning, so that they can become effective life-long learners, striving for excellence.

We aim to demonstrate clear Christian characteristics and values, whilst at the same time, encouraging recognition of and respect for other faiths.

We value greatly school, home and parish connections.

We believe in "Living, Loving and Learning" together in God's World.

Our vision is to empower creative independent thinkers who are resilient to challenges, in readiness for our diverse and ever-changing world.

### **Rationale and Aims**

At St. Johns C E Primary School we:

- have a strong commitment to establishing a positive, supportive and safe environment where children feel valued;
- believe that excellent attendance, along with punctuality, is fundamental to ensuring children achieve their full potential;
- are committed to safeguarding the interests of every child, promoting their welfare and opportunities; and
- believe every child should attend school on time each day unless there is a valid reason e.g. illness.

### **Why good attendance is important**

When children are absent their learning patterns change and learning is affected. Research indicates that some children never catch up after prolonged absence and that they experience greater problems, during the secondary phase of their education.

### **Excellent levels of attendance are expected**

We expect every child to have attendance of 95% or above and recognise excellent attendance with annual 100% certificates. Badges are also awarded on a termly basis for 100% attendance.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The headteacher takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures.

The headteacher in conjunction with senior school leaders take overall responsibility for implementing the attendance policy and procedures and for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

School Governors have responsibility for handling complaints regarding the attendance policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

**All school staff promote good attendance and punctuality through on-going dialogue with parents and their involvement in the attendance procedures.**

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers following the attendance policy and encourage pupils do the same. They take responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers model good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

It is expected that parents/carers:

- take responsibility for the attendance of their child/ren during term-time;
- promote good attendance behaviours by ensuring that their child/ren attend school every day; and
- encourage their child/ren take responsibility for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

## **Definitions**

### **'absence'**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

### **'authorised absence'**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments, which unavoidably fall, during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

### **'unauthorised absence'**

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences, which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays during term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

### **'persistent absenteeism' (PA)**

Missing 15 percent (15%) or more of schooling across the year for whatever reason.

## **Pupil expectations**

Pupils will be expected to attend school every day. Parents/carers support this by signing the home/school agreement.

## **Absence procedure**

Parents/carers contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and asked to provide a specific reason for the absence. It is not an acceptable reason that a child is just 'not well', more detail needs to be given and recorded by the school.

From 10.00am phone calls are made to any parents / carers of children where no contact/reason for absence has been received. This happens each day until the specific reason for the absence is known.

Parents/carers may call into school to report an absence and where arrangements, if necessary, can be made for them to speak to relevant members of staff.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Head of School.

If pupil absence drops below 90%, the local authority attendance officer is informed and a letter is sent home from school together with an up-to-date print out of the child's absence.

### **Contact information**

Parents/carers are required to provide accurate and up to date contact details and for updating the school if the details change.

### **Attendance Officer**

If children are persistently absent, families are referred to the local authority attendance officer who then attempts to agree a resolution. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local authority attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

Registers are taken twice a day- once at the start of the morning and again at the start of the afternoon session.

School doors open at 8:55 in KS2 and 9:05 in KS1/EYFS, and all children are expected to be on premises by these times.

### **Term time leave**

At St. Johns C E Primary School, our aim is to prepare children for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holiday pattern.

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Heads of School / Head-Teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example, bereavement or serious illness. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the children's previous attendance record will be considered.

### **Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:**

- Immediately before and during assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 per cent (10%) for any reason.

If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' and any request can only be authorised where there are 'exceptional circumstance'.

All absence taken in term time can only be authorised by the Head of School.

A request for Leave of Absence form is available from the school offices, which should be completed and returned to school along with any travel documentation. The headteacher then speaks to the parents/carers personally about their request and explains that 'holidays' during term time are classed as unauthorised. Parents/carers may lose their child's place on the school roll if the child does not return within five days of the agreed date of return.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more within each school year, (whether continuous or sporadic) may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice, in the first instance of £60 per parent per child.

Non-payment of the fine or persistent absenteeism may result in an increase of fine and/or county court action. Further unauthorised absence could also lead directly to court action.

There are 2 session marks per day and the 10 session threshold could be made up of any combination of unauthorised marks.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Unauthorised holidays.
- No reason provided for absence.
- Unsatisfactory reason for absence
- Unauthorised late marks

### **Monitoring**

St. Johns C E Primary School monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

- The school has established targets for attendance (97%).
- Details of absence levels can be requested from the school offices.

### **Escalation Procedures**

1. Class based, informal reminders between class teachers and parents / carers.
2. ½ termly below 95% print out and analysed by Heads of School. If the absences are not deemed as legitimate a letter and copy of the attendance print out is sent home. If the attendance does not improve then parents / carers will be invited into school to discuss.
3. A meeting between the headteacher and parents / carers is organised to discuss any underlying issues and ways in which the school can be of support to the family.
4. The Attendance Officer will then attend a meeting between all concerned if the attendance does not improve.
5. Further action will be taken by the Attendance Officer if 10 unauthorised sessions occur in any 12 week period.

### **Religious Observances**

- Up to 2 days per year are allowed for religious observance.

- Decisions for any school closures will be taken at a governor level.

### **Appointments**

- As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, an appointment card should be shown to school.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they must be signed out by a parent/carer.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible

### **Persistent Absence**

- An individual child whose attendance is under 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised) will be closely monitored by the headteacher and senior school leaders, a letter from the headteacher will be issued regarding any concerns about their attendance.
- Persistent Absence is recorded half termly and sent to the Local Authority for monitoring purposes.
- The school will inform the Local Authority of any child who has been absent from school without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

### **Approved Educational Activity**

Children who are educated off-site or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, such as school residential trips, day visits to secondary schools or curriculum enrichment activities at local secondary schools are marked as present.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Provision is made for all children regardless of ability, disability, additional needs, medical conditions, gender, faith or ethnicity and reasonable adjustments are made in a range of ways. All children have a right to be treated equally and the school will take measures against those who do not abide by this ethos.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This attendance policy will be evaluated on an annual basis. Attendance will be monitored by the Head Teacher half termly and the results of this process including achievements for the current year and targets for the coming academic year will be presented to the Governing Body.