



St John's Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date Approved:	19th May 2021
Headteacher:	Mrs Helen Langeveld
Chair of Governors:	Mr Robin Davis
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Love, Respect, Value

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to high expectations for all and to embracing equality.

'A school community has no higher task than to help children and young people develop a deep and proper sense of their worth.'

John Cox: More Than caring and Sharing page 51

Introduction

As a school we recognise the importance of punctual and regular school attendance in order to ensure that all pupils maximise their learning and achievement. School provides a stable and secure environment in which pupils can feel safe and thrive. Our aim therefore is to work with parents and carers to ensure the children's attendance is maximised, taking national targets into account.

Rationale/Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the school commitment and proactive approach to ensuring good attendance. Therefore, it details the expectations, formal procedures and specific approaches that support good attendance.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure good attendance by all pupils
- raise achievement through the promotion of good attendance
- demonstrate the value and care that the school ascribes to each individual
- provide clear guidance to staff, parents/carers and pupils on their roles and responsibilities
- detail the procedures and actions to produce good attendance and punctuality

Monitoring

We believe that unnecessary absence or lateness is a barrier to learning and progress. As a result, the school will monitor, on a regular basis, the attendance and punctuality of pupils in order to take action where there are concerns. The LA Attendance Officer monitors the school attendance data through termly meetings.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the school, parents/carers and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which this policy makes of them.

The Role of the School

The school will provide a safe learning environment in which all pupils can thrive and succeed. In order to ensure pupils make the progress of which they are capable, we will:

- ensure pupils are able to attend school for the set amount of time for the year (190 days, 380 sessions)
- ensure that accurate records of attendance and punctuality are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance, on a daily basis;
- clearly distinguish between absences which are authorised and those which are unauthorised (it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised);
- encourage good attendance and punctuality and ensure school staff set good examples in this regard;
- investigate all unexplained or unjustified absences and follow up poor attendance and punctuality;
- keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and work with parents should either give cause for concern;
- monitor attendance and punctuality levels termly and report to Governors;

- liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Team Improvement over attendance and punctuality issues relating to individual pupils

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's attendance and punctuality at school. They are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered. Consequently they should:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- ensure their child is properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- not arrange family holidays in term time
- inform the school by 8.55 am on the first day of absence and communicate the reason for their child's absence by telephone/email or in person
- maintain regular communication with school staff about any concerns/issues;
- ensure the school office is notified immediately of any change to contact details;
- take an active interest in their child's school life and work

Role of Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school, and all of their lessons, regularly and on time. They should also:

- be ready to learn
- not leave the school without permission and without signing out at reception
- sign in, if they arrive late or if they arrived back from an authorised appointment, e.g. doctor's appointment

Equality and Diversity

Individual needs of children and families will always be taken into account for example Pupil Premium, SEND, Children Looked After and any other Vulnerable group. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school will contact the carer, social worker or any other other professionals including the Virtual School for CLA, as an early intervention.

Doors open

Currently there is a staggered start to the school day:

8.35 Y3/4

8.40 Y1/2

8.45 Rec

Registration

Registration will take place at the start of each morning and afternoon session. This means the registers are called between 8.55am and 9.10am in the mornings and between 1.00pm and 1.05pm in the afternoons.

Pupils who arrive after a registration period, i.e. after 8.55am or 1.05pm, need to sign in at reception before proceeding to their lesson.

Pupils who arrive after registration (9.10am and 1.05pm) will be issued with a late mark.

Pupils arriving after the closure of the registers (9.30am and 1.35pm), without reasonable explanation, will be recorded as 'Unauthorised Absence'.

At registration pupils should be called by name and respond in a manner agreed with the Headteacher.

Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance. (See **Appendix A** – Absence and Attendance Codes.) Attendance records will be stored on the school's Management Information System.

Absences

Parents/carers must provide an explanation for all absences from school. During absences lasting longer than one day (except for the 48 hours sickness and diarrhoea rule) parents/carers must phone the school office for each day of absence. Where no explanation is provided from home on the first day of an absence, the school will ring to contact parent/carers on the contact numbers supplied by them at 9.15am.

For extended absences beyond three days, parents/carers should contact the school again to detail the reason for continued absence. If this does not happen, contact may be made with home by the office staff.

The absence will not be authorised until this has been received and even then authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Absences that the Headteacher will authorise are detailed in **Appendix B**.

Pupils' attendance figures, including Unauthorised Absence, will be recorded on their annual report.

Following-up Absences

The school will follow up all absences and contact parents/carers if their child's attendance falls below 95% in a term.

The Headteacher will refer to the Attendance Team pupils whose attendance falls below 90% at any time during the year. Subsequent action recommended by the Attendance Team will then be followed through by the school, e.g. letter home from school, letter home from Attendance Team, home visit by Attendance Team, penalty notice issued by Local Authority.

Penalty Notice

We always strive to work with parents/carers to address attendance and punctuality issues. However if a pupil has at least 15 sessions (i.e. 15 half days) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays), the Headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice. If paid within 21 days the fine is £60, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid, the Local Authority may subsequently prosecute the parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions. As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Family Holidays and Other Absences

For absences other than sickness, parents/carers must seek the Headteacher's prior approval.

The school will not authorise family holidays, except in very exceptional circumstances that may be authorised by the Headteacher. These are detailed in **Appendix B**.

Requests for such leave must be made at least three weeks before the planned absence (except in the case of funerals). Requests need to be submitted on the 'Leave of Absence' form obtainable from the school office or school website. See **Appendix C** – Leave of Absence Request.

Parents/carers may be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the request.

Lateness

Any pupil arriving at school who is late will report to reception and sign the 'signing-in' sheet, supervised by the receptionist.

Entries on the 'signing-in/out' sheet will be transferred to the MIS system by the office staff.

During a fire drill the office staff will ensure the Fire List is available to check registers.

Following-up Lateness

Parents/ carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in order to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

Incentives

Attendance is published in the weekly newsletter to highlight the importance to parents/carers. Attendance is discussed with parents in the Autumn and Spring term Learning Update Meetings.

As a school we work with other agencies to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available, to achieve good attendance. This means on occasions sharing information for example for Education Health Care Plans or through Families First.

Publication of Information

As a school we share information on an individual pupil's attendance, as necessary, with parents/carers, pupils and staff. We also provide aggregated attendance information and statistics to school Governors as part of the termly Headteacher's report.

Also on a termly basis we submit attendance levels and percentages of unauthorised absences and authorised absences to the DfE through the School Census.

Appendix A

Codes from Scholarpack

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code B: Off-site educational activity

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code V: Educational visit or trip

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Code E: Authorised absence excluded but no alternative provision made

Code H: Family holiday authorised by the school

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code M: Authorised medical or dental appointments

Code R: Authorised religious observance

Code S: Study leave

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code X: Not compulsory school age

Code Y: Forced Closure ie Snow Day (exceptional circumstances)

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register (not counted in possible attendance)

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure (not counted in possible attendance)

Appendix B – Attendance Policy

Absences that the Headteacher may/will not authorise

Absences that the Headteacher may authorise:

- Medical/dental appointments
- Approved PE/sporting activity
- Days of religious observance linked to the faith of the parents
- Absence under licence issued by the CSA for theatrical/other performances
- Sickness
- School educational visit
- Educated off site
- Approved examinations / tests e.g. Music exams
- Immediate Family/carer trauma or funeral
- Weddings (immediate family members, 1 day maximum)
- Visits to new schools prior to re-location

Absences that the Headteacher will not authorise:

- Holidays in term-time except in very exceptional circumstances and certainly not after the event for which no leave of absence has been granted
- Looking after siblings or parents who are unwell
- Birthdays
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences lacking a proper explanation