



## ALL SAINTS C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

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**SCHOOL 212**

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. All Saints CE Primary School expects and encourages all children to attend every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

There is a direct link between underachievement and poor attendance. Pupils who attend school regularly make better progress, both academically and socially. They find learning more satisfying and cope better with school work and school routines.

All Saints CE Primary School aims to maintain an overall whole school attendance above 95%. Each pupil's attendance can be summarised as below:

Above 95%	Good attendance which will help all aspects of pupil's progress and life in school.
90% - 94%	Attendance requires improvement. Depending on the reason(s) resulting in these attendance figures, the School may contact parents/ carers in order to improve the situation.
Below 90%	Unacceptable attendance which is causing serious concern and has a serious negative impact on pupil's attainment and progress. The School will work with parents/ carers and the Attendance Improvement Officer to improve the pupil's attendance.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the School acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents/ carers keep the School fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance. Prior to the engagement of the Attendance Improvement Officer, the School may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for Attendance Improvement Officer involvement.

This Attendance policy is based on National Guidance and Recommendations which requires schools *"to work closely with Attendance Improvement Teams and Parents to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils"*.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

Improving attendance at All Saints CE Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents, staff and governors.

### **Responsibilities - Parents and Carers**

Parents are responsible by law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their child attends school at all times unless they are too unwell to attend. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues, which may lead to non-attendance.
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- notify their child's school if he/she is absent and provide an explanation for the absence. This should be done on the first day of absence by phone and then followed up in writing on the day the child returns.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

### **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. At the end of the academic year, pupils with 100% attendance will be presented with certificates. Individual classes will also be rewarded for good attendance each term. This will be determined by calculating the best class average attendance each term.

### **Parents**

Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns, which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents whose child's attendance is a cause for congratulation or concern will be written to by the Headteacher following advice and discussion with the Attendance Improvement Officer. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English or have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication as far as we are able.

### **School**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff). The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

## Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 08.55am and at 1.00pm (infants)/ 1:15pm (juniors) and will be marked in red or black in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register front sheet. The classroom doors will close as soon as the class has gone in. If the door is closed parents must take children to the office. Classroom doors cannot be reopened for safety reasons.

Registers will close at 09.05am and at 1.05pm for infants and 1.20pm for juniors. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as 'absent'. Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the School Office and sign the School Late Book. If a pupil is persistently late, the Headteacher will contact the parents.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes. The School Office staff will check the registers for any absentees so that appropriate steps can be taken to check on the absence. The Head teacher will inspect all registers each half term in order to ensure that correct procedures are being followed.

The school is required to notify the Attendance Improvement Officer of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.

## Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Definition of authorised absence – an absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for legitimate reason and the school has received prior notification from a parent or carer.

Definition of unauthorised absence – an absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is way from school without a legitimate reason, even with the support of a parent

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. All Saints CE Primary School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence'. This states that:

*Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation in relation to a particular absence does not, itself, oblige the school to accept the explanation offered if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.*

Where a child is continuing to have low attendance and the absences are being supported by parents giving medical reasons then the school will expect medical evidence before authorisation will be granted. Parents will be informed of this as appropriate.

Parents/ carers must use the School's 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (Appendix 1) for all absences other than sickness and medical/dental appointments (see separate paragraph for Medical/Dental appointments).

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body)
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs

- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for the child's transport to and from school
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending a school visit/ interview or music/sporting examination
- the pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion (at the Headteacher's discretion)

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil stays at home because of parental organisation issues e.g taking relative to hospital, mum ill, parent appointments
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday or a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school
- the pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return

### **Medical / Dental Appointments**

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. The school should be informed in advance of any medical or dental appointments taken during school hours in writing. Otherwise the absence may be recorded as 'unauthorised absence'.

### **Family Holidays during Term Time**

Parents are not allowed to take children out for family holidays during term time. From 1 September 2013 School Attendance Regulations prohibit any school from authorising leave of absence for holidays except in exceptional circumstances. If the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

It is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

1. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
2. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.

The interpretation of 'exceptional circumstances' will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it is important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

The request for leave of absence must be done in writing at least 2 weeks prior the leave is to take place, using the school's 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (see appendix 1) . The Headteacher

will decide whether the leave of absence can be authorised and will contact the parent to inform them of the outcome. Even where there are exceptional circumstances, no holiday requests will be granted during any period of external examinations (the month of May for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, the month of June for Year 1 pupils).

### **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- All Saints CE Primary School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice
- Secretary will enter data onto computer program to highlight any pupils with persistent poor attendance
- Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of each school year
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement
- Good class attendance will be celebrated termly with 'golden time'
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance
- A special certificate is given at the end of the School year for pupils with 100% attendance for the whole school year.
- The Headteacher will make an annual report to the school's governing body on attendance figures in the Autumn Term
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - Educational Psychology Service, Social Care, Attendance Improvement Officer, Family Support worker or Child and Family Guidance, etc - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

- Fixed Penalty Notices will apply to any parent who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is registered at a state school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not found in a public place during schools hours without a justifiable reason.
- The Penalty notice will be issued via the Local Authority (LA) on the advice and discretion of the Headteacher.
- The Fixed Penalty Fine will be £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute.
- The Attendance Improvement Team sees Fixed Penalty Notices as an effective part of improving school attendance and discouraging unauthorised attendance.
- Fixed Penalty Notices are supported by both the LA and the Department for Education.

### **Procedures for Following up Absence**

- on the first day of absence, the school secretary will contact key parents if an explanation is not forthcoming for identified cases
- if a pupil is absent for more than three consecutive days (without an explanation being forthcoming,) the school will call or write to the parents.
- if a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher will write to the parents.
- if a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note or if the explanation offered by a note is unsatisfactory, the School will send the standard letter to the parents

- if a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to affect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer, during their consultation visit.
- Notes from parents will be kept in the school office until the end of the academic year when they will be placed in the registers and filed.

### **Punctuality**

All Saints CE Primary School expects all pupils to be punctual and arrive to school in time. When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson/ school day. This reduces their chances on academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption – pupils may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

In the mornings the School gates are promptly locked at 8:55am, when the registers are taken. Any pupil arriving after 8:55am will be recorded 'late' in the register and must report to the School Office, where an entry to the School's Late Book must be filled in by a parent/ carer. If the pupil arrives after registers are closed (9:05am or 1:05pm for infants/ 1:20pm for juniors), the whole session will be marked as unauthorised absence, if an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming.

If a pupil is late due to exceptional circumstances, no action will be taken. If a pupil is frequently late with the same or similar explanation, the School will either write to parents/ carers or ask to meet with parents/ carers to identify any issues that are causing the pupil to arrive late at school.

Persistent lateness will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer, if the pupil's punctuality has not improved as a result of conversations or correspondence between the School and parents/ carers. Older pupils may also be required to make up any work missed due to persistent lateness during break or lunchtime.



## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent or carer, you should fill in this form if you wish to take your child out of school during term time. This form is to be used for all absences other than sickness and medical/dental appointments. After completing the form, please return it to the Headteacher of your child's school no less than 2 weeks before the date when you want the period of absence to start.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Even where there are exceptional circumstances, no holiday requests will be granted during any period of external examinations (the month of May for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, the month of June for Year 1 pupils).

### Parent/Carer to complete this section:

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of child)

in class \_\_\_\_\_ be granted leave of absence

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(First day absent from School) (The last school day that will be missed)

in order to take part in \_\_\_\_\_ (event).

The leave cannot be taken in the normal school holidays because

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Please supply an attached letter if necessary if you need further space to explain)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Parent/ Carer

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

### Headteacher to complete this section:

Attendance % (up until Autumn half-term use the % figure from previous academic year)

Above 95% - Good attendance  
 90% - 94% - Requires improvement  
 Below 90% - Unacceptable attendance

How much leave of absence has already been granted this academic year?

Your request is **approved** and the absence as set out above is authorised

Your request is **not approved**. If the pupil is absent as proposed above, it will be recorded as **unauthorised** for the following reason:

Reason:

Signed:

Dated: