

St John's CE VA First School Attendance Policy

This policy should be taken as part of St. John's C. of E. First School's overall strategy and is implemented within the context of our vision of Government aims and our values as a Church of England School.

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support children and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable children to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Punctuality is also important and is a good life skill best learned at an early age. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- discuss promptly with the class teacher or School Office any problems that may affect their child's school attendance.
- ensure that they inform the school **daily** of absence or, if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- provide medical evidence if a child is absent for four or more days before the illness is marked as authorised absence: this may be an appointment ticket or card from the drop in centre of doctor's surgery.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Examples	Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
	*genuine illness of the child; *hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the child; * major religious observances *visits to prospective new schools *external exams or educational assessments.	*shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park; *a birthday treat; *oversleeping due to a late night; *looking after other children / other family member; *appointments for other family members.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitoring individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward.
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance where their children's attendance is falling below thresholds.
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly.
- provide support through other agencies where that would be deemed helpful in establishing regular and punctual attendance (eg Parent Family Support Advisor)
- meet regularly with the Education Attendance Officer (EAO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Attendance Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Attendance may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality when attending school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is really important therefore that all children arrive at school on time. Children should be on site by 8:50am and are admitted to the building for registration at 8:55am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child.

- Registration takes place at 8.55am and children who arrive after that time will be recorded as late .
- Registers close at 9.10am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm.
- Persistent lateness by a child will be dealt with through initial discussion with the class teacher, a letter home to parents after five lates and a meeting with the Headteacher after ten lates and may be referred to the Education Attendance Service.
- A child's attendance is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Children Leaving During the School Day

School staff must know where each child is during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time.
- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the School Office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the children as a missing person.*

Leave of Absence

The school holidays and INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change. Holidays should be taken during these times.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- where leave of absence in term time is due to **exceptional circumstances, (SEE APPENDIX TWO)** an application form must be requested from the School Office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the child's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Attendance Service will be notified.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a child is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty Notices for Holidays

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when children are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.

Truancy Patrol

- When a child comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 3 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to **each** parent/carers, for each child.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:
- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- The Education Attendance Service can also instigate legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an Education Supervision Order to secure regular attendance.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

- At St John's First School we monitor attendance on a weekly basis. If a child's attendance is identified as a cause of concern then a letter is sent to advise parents. If there is no improvement then a second letter is sent inviting parents to a meeting with the Headteacher. If attendance remains a concern then a referral is made to the Education Attendance Service.
- The Education Attendance Service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their children's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or EAS Officers. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Changing Schools

- It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform St John's First School as soon as possible.
- A child will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:
- The date the child will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The child's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the child will be registered as Missing from Education and the Local Authority will be notified.

Appendix One

The Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Child Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a **family holiday** during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations 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.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days. Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Appendix Two

There is no formal definition offered for **exceptional leave** at present by the Department for Education. However, advice from the DfE indicates that **exceptional leave** may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave

- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

At St John's First School, the Headteacher is always sympathetic to absence in relation to critical family illness and bereavement, and 'exceptional cases' may also arise which are not covered by any of the above.