

St. John's C.E. Primary School



St. John's School Vision Statement

Shine like stars

Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Policy: Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Reviewed: April 2023

Future Review: April 2025

At St. John's School we recognise that regular attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. To make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance and good punctuality allows.

School Vision

We believe that all children have the right to the very best education, we want all our children to grow and flourish in a nurturing community, supported by God's love and the core values of His Kingdom. Our aim is to provide this by ensuring that our core values of forgiveness, respect, endurance, compassion, justice and confidence underpin everything we do. In our role as a church school, we want to ensure that everyone is well supported to develop their gifts and broaden their horizons within the knowledge and love of God.

'Shine like stars' so that every child can achieve this, we want to work very closely with all families to ensure that they are well supported and fully understand the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality in their child's education and overall development.

Parents' and Carers' Responsibility

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Education Act 1996

Regular and punctual attendance helps to ensure our children are happy in school and achieving their full potential. Routine habits of work, formed when young, lay good foundations for future education and for the adult world of responsibilities and employment.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and frequent absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class too.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Bringing their children to school every day and on time, 8.45am gates open
- The collection of their children at the end of the school day.
- Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly and the need to observe the school's code of conduct regarding behaviour, code of dress, homework etc.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to poor attendance.
- Ensuring they are aware of the attendance and punctuality policy of the school.
- Notifying the school regarding absence on the first day of absence. The explanation of this absence should be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school.
- Providing medical evidence when required.
- Arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours.
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term time.
- Make applications for exceptional leave in writing, giving the reason for the request.

Staff Responsibilities

The School is responsible for supporting the attendance and punctuality of their pupils and for dealing with problems which may lead to poor attendance or punctuality.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance and punctuality looking particularly for either poor overall attendance/punctuality, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of the Attendance Officer, (Mrs. Flanagan).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.
- Setting an exemplary example by being punctual and having good attendance themselves.

Attendance Officer (Mrs Flanagan who is supported by Mrs. Notley) is responsible for:

- Supporting parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils.
- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher for information about individuals.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence.
- Being sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and parent.
- Responding promptly to issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised.
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter.
- Promptly checking that registers have been completed and submitted by the class teacher on a twice daily (am & pm) basis to ensure that the 'fire list' is ready for use in emergencies.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up on unexplained absences (first day calling).
- Ensuring registers are accurate.
- Collating attendance percentages.
- Processing and following up holiday forms.
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Generating warning letters to parents.
- Making referrals to Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Ensuring that the attendance and punctuality policy is followed and that the actions from EWS meetings are carried out.
- Liaising and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance/punctuality.
- Regular meetings with the EWS.
- Notifying (in consultation with the Headteacher) the EWS of the need for a Fixed Penalty Notice and providing support with prosecution.

- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases.
- Ensuring procedures for class and individual rewards for good attendance are followed.
- Regularly reporting to the Headteacher and Deputy Head on attendance issues.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Promotion of attendance and good punctuality at all times.
- Informing the Governing Body of attendance data and how the school is addressing issues.

Attendance Registers

- Under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 we are required to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session pupils are marked present or absent.
- Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- When calling the register, the appropriate mark and/symbol should be selected against each pupil's name. In completing registers, staff need to select the appropriate radio button; present/absent/late or early years.
- A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register.

First Day Calling

- Parents/carers should call the school before 9:00am on the day their child is off.
- If the school has not been notified of a reason for absence, attempts to contact the parent/carer/other given telephone numbers will be made.
Parents must provide the school with 2 telephone numbers of people to contact with regards to a child on roll.
- If the school cannot speak to a parent/carer/relative on the first day a home visit will be made to check the child is okay. If no one is at home a note will be left for the parent to contact the school by 3:00pm.
- The police will be informed if there has still been no contact by the end of the first day of absence.

Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register:

- If a child goes missing from education do **First Day of Calling** as above. Then refer to the EWO and they will investigate. EWO will let the school know when to take the child off roll but usually 20 days.
- Notification has been given that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school.
- If the child has been registered at another school.

Punctuality

Parents and carers must ensure that their children arrive at school on time and are collected promptly at the end of the school day. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and into the wider world.

- Afternoon Nursery sessions start at 12.15pm and finishes at 2.50pm.
- All children go straight into their classrooms and make a prompt start to their learning.
- Children who arrive late after 9am
- Registers must be completed by 9.00am, children arriving after this time are late.
- Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken but before 9.15am. Time of arrival is recorded in the register.
- Registers close at 9.15am.
- A parent/carer needs to give the reason for any absence/lateness; a child's word cannot be accepted.
- Parents and carers with problems getting their children to school on time can contact the Head teacher.
- If staff have any concerns at all about attendance including lateness, they will alert the Head teacher.

Marking of Attendance Registers - guide to symbols

/am \pm Present

L Late during registration period

U Late after registration period – indicate in notes box the time of arrival and reason given (note required from home)

Symbols for authorised absence:

B Educated off-site (not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by any other code)

D Dual registered (i.e. present at another school)

E Exclusion

F Agreed extended family holiday

H Agreed family holiday

I Illness

J Interview

M Medical or dental appointment

P Approved sporting activity

R Day set aside exclusively for religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience (not work based training)

X Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory schooling

Y Partial and forced closure

Z Pupil not on roll yet

School closed to all pupils

Symbols for unauthorised absence:

G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of authorised holiday)
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes)

The Attendance Officer/Teachers must obtain a reason for all child absences.

Promoting Regular Attendance

It is vital to remember that the vast majority of children at St. John's School arrive on time and every day. An important part of our attendance and punctuality policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly.

In order to do this:

- Each week the class with the highest attendance score (if over 96%) will be allowed to come to school on Monday in non-school uniform and are presented with the Attendance Cup in Celebration Assembly.
- Attendance and punctuality figures are published in the school newsletter and read out in Celebration Assembly.
- Children are awarded individually for 100% attendance for the whole year.

School Procedures in Cases of Intervention

A formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained and/or absences are frequent:

- If a child is off for more than 3 days for medical reasons – medical evidence must be provided on the 4th day.
- Discussion with the parent/carer and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from school regarding the child's attendance.
- Parents and carers are invited to the school for the opportunity to meet with the Inclusion Manager to discuss the pattern of attendance.
- Letters of concern are sent to parents and carers when attendance drops below 96%, 93% and 91%, following which the Inclusion Manager will meet with child's parents/carers.
- The Inclusion Manager will identify barriers to regular school attendance by working with parents and carers and offer the necessary support to try and improve attendance.
- The school tries very hard to support parents before the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service needs to become involved.
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the Local Authority's Attendance Policy.
- Pupils who have an attendance figure of below 90% will require medical evidence for absences and parents will be informed of this.

Following Up Attendance Issues – Procedures

EWS Meeting

The Attendance Officer/ Inclusion Manager meets regularly with the Educational Welfare Service to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individuals. Prior to the meeting the following information is collected:

- Attendance record for any child with less than 93% attendance
- Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate.

Following the meeting with the EWS, class teachers are notified of the outcome and agreed actions are discussed with the Headteacher and followed up as appropriate.

Penalty Notices

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body in the 'Headteacher's Report' the attendance percentage for the school and on any specific trends and/or difficulties with individuals.

As from September 2015, the Governing Body agreed to the use of Penalty Notices to improve school attendance.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives schools the power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of non-school attendance. This is an alternative to prosecution. Prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a formal warning letter will be sent to parents/carers advising that there will be a 15 day monitoring period for attendance to improve and for them to contact the Headteacher to discuss the school's concerns.

Currently the Penalty Notice is:

- A fine of £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the fine is not paid parents/carers may be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attends school.

A warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued will be sent to both parents or carers (where applicable) for any of the following reasons:

- Their child has an amount of unauthorised absence.
- Their child is taken on holiday during term-time.
- Truancy.
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed at 9.15am.

Only the Headteacher can authorise any absence. Evidence of the reason for absence may be requested.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Applications of leave for special circumstances must be made to the Headteacher in advance. Depending on the reason for the request, the Headteacher will consider to authorise or unauthorise the absence. Evidence may be requested. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Each request will be considered individually. Holidays during term time cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are an offence.

Religious Observance

Parents/Carers must ask the Headteacher in advance for time off for religious reasons. The Government publish a list of dates that can be authorised and the school will refer to this when considering the request.