



*St John's C.E.
Primary School*

Attendance Policy

October 2018

Our Vision

Our vision is for St John's to be a place that encourages every child to aspire to their dreams; a place where friendship is at the heart and everybody feels safe and where God's world and diversity is celebrated, enjoyed and sustained; a strong link with the local community, parents, governors and Church enables children to learn about the importance of faith; where children are able to learn through their strengths, with high standards and expectations, children are able to reach their full potential. Individuality is valued and diversity is celebrated.

Our school was created in the Autumn of 2007 in the Diocese of Worcestershire but the foundation of the school reaches back to 1850. Recognising its foundation, the school preserves and develops its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.

Introduction

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child is paramount. Therefore, failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding matter. If a pupil is absent for 10 or more days consecutively and the reason is unauthorised, then a referral will be remained to the local authority as a child missing in education.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- celebrate good attendance;
- reward good or improving attendance through our behaviour policy (Epraise rewards policy).

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%. Twenty whole days of school has been missed if a pupil's attendance is 90%.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are offered support from our Social Inclusion and support Manager with a view to tackling any barriers to good attendance.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- telephone or email school (via ParentMail) by 9:30am on the first day of absence;
- or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent the Attendance officer will:

- telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with his/her Class Teacher and/or Pastoral Leaders if absences persist;
- refer the matter to the Headteacher if attendance moves below 93%.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together which is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out and unauthorised absences persist, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer who may issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Did you know that being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school over the year. Lateness is just as serious as nonattendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:40 am** and we expect your child to be on school premises at that time.

If your child arrives after **8:50 am**, they will receive a late mark on the electronic signing in system.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a late mark on the electronic system that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean

they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer and/or senior member of staff to find a way to resolve the problem. However, you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Government regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a term time holiday. Headteachers are not allowed to grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be granted leave of absence during term time for not more than one week (5 school days) in any calendar year. If you wish to make an application for a planned absence please obtain a form from reception. The form should be completed and forwarded to the school not less than six weeks before the planned absence is due to begin.

Where the application for planned absence has been submitted within the timeframe, all carers with 'Parental Responsibility' will be notified in writing of the decision.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Reviewed –
Governing Body Approval on.....
Signed by Chair of Governing Body.....

