

St John & St James Church of England Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Document Information			
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Signature (FGB)		Signature (Head)	<i>P Cuncarr</i>

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. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely. Our school target for attendance is 96%.

At St John & St James', we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

1. To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
2. To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
3. To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
4. To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
5. To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
6. To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
7. To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

1. The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
2. The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
3. The Local Authority to provide support and advice on the requirements of attendance at school.

Head Teacher:

4. To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
5. To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Local Authority policies and procedures.
6. To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with London Borough of Enfield' policies and procedures.

Deputy Head Teacher and Attendance Lead:

7. To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
8. To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
9. To meet with the Attendance officer to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.

10. To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals when necessary.
11. To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
12. Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
13. To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Attendance Officer:

14. To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
15. To monitor weekly attendance data for all class and year groups.
16. To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
17. To promptly inform the DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
18. To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for DHT/SMT/SLT/GB to analyse.
19. To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
20. To implement the daily checking of e-Portal registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
21. To contact parents/carers by letter, following 3 instances of lateness or absence.
22. To maintain attendance records in line with this policy.
23. To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
24. To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
25. To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
26. To contribute to the administration of all admission , induction of new pupils and leavers.
27. To support DHT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
28. To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
29. Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

30. To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
31. To complete the daily class attendance and punctuality chart, with the pupils'.
32. To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the online register system.
33. Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's MIS system at 9.00 am and 12.45 / 1.00 pm.
34. To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
35. To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
36. Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
37. Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
38. If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
39. Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.

40. To promptly inform the DHT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
41. To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

42. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomachaches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know, providing evidence of medical appointments.
- 43 Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Provide medical evidence when illness means that a child is in danger of becoming a persistent absentee.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

43. Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
44. Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
45. Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
46. Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

Extended Holidays

In line with London Borough of Enfield guidelines, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.

The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for

example:

47. The death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil.
48. Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil.
49. Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
50. Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) If a teacher or other member of staff suspects that a student has been removed from, or prevented from, attending education as a result of FGM or in order to undergo FGM, a referral should be made to the local authority children's social care and the police. <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/fgm%20guidance.pdf>

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

In the light of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 the headteacher will only authorise leave in term time in exceptional circumstances. The governors of St John and St James School have defined examples of exceptional circumstances as follows and given direction to the number of school days a child can be away:

Authorised exceptional circumstance	Number of days
Family funeral in UK of a direct relation (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle)	1 day or 2 days if travelling a substantial distance
Family funeral in Europe (non UK) of a direct relation (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle)	2-3 school days
Family funeral in remainder of world (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle).	up to 5 days
Genuine, recognised emergencies which prevent travel. Eg volcanic ash cloud or natural disaster while on holiday	up to 5 days or longer if deemed necessary by national and international organisations.
Other genuinely exceptional circumstances	To be determined by the headteacher

There are limited reasons for authorised absences which are detailed below. While an explanation for absence may be offered by a parent or carer, it is the responsibility of the school to authorise an absence. In authorising an absence the decision of the headteacher or deputy is final.

Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genuine illness of the pupil • hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil • major religious observances • visits to prospective new schools • external exams or educational assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park • a birthday treat; • looking after other children / other family member; • appointments for other family members • illness of other family members

Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances as detailed above, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, at the earliest opportunity.

- The headteacher will take into account the child's normal attendance pattern.
- During Key Stage assessments for Year 6 the Headteacher reserves the right to limit the number of days absence so the child can complete their assessments within the permitted timeframe for a time-table variation.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare service will be notified.

Persistent Absences

Irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. The school's dedicated Educational Welfare Officer may write to a family or meet with them to plan support to improve their child's attendance. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Educational Welfare service may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. Failure to pay a penalty notice within the timeframes may lead to prosecution by the local authority.

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, came 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.