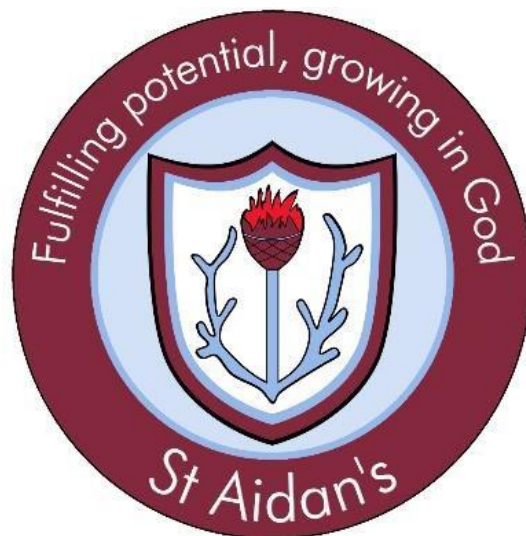


St. Aidan's Primary School-A Church of England Academy



St Aidan's Primary School
A Church of England Academy

Fulfilling potential, growing in God

Attendance Policy

June 2016

At St. Aidan's Primary School-A Church of England Academy we fully recognise the link between high levels of attendance and the progress children make in their learning. We know from many years of experience that children with poor attendance very often fall behind in their learning and that the longer this goes on, the bigger this gap becomes.

Our mission statement is, '*Fulfilling potential, growing in God,*' and we want children to realise their potential and to make the most of the learning experiences available to them.

This is why as a school we promote high levels of attendance and punctuality in a number of different ways:

- The 'Attendance Race' – the three classes with the best attendance have their rockets moved on a display in the hall during each Friday assembly. When a class reaches their target, the children receive a whole-class treat which they choose (for example, a film or art and craft afternoon). The Attendance Race is reported in our weekly newsletter.
- Children receive certificates for excellent levels of attendance in end of term assemblies and at the end of year Prize-giving Service.
- We employ a Family Support Worker, Mrs Trencher, who works with families to help them improve their child's attendance and punctuality. Mrs Trencher also works with children in school to teach the importance of being in school every day.
- We provide parents with an 'Attendance – Facts for Parents' handbook containing lots of useful information and tips.

We actively encourage all parents and carers to make sure their child(ren) are in school and on time every day. Even if a child is not feeling 100% it is worth sending them in to see how they go on as school will always contact parents swiftly if a child is too ill to remain in school. If a child is sent home ill, this will be counted as an **authorised absence**.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between **authorised** and **unauthorised** absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not, in itself, authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied with the explanation of the absence will it be authorised. The next section deals with authorised and unauthorised absence.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

The school will decide how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DfE 1994).

Absence can be **authorised** for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical and dental appointments (absences due to medical appointments will only be authorised on production of a valid appointment card or slip; however, we encourage all appointments for doctors and dentists to be made outside of the school day)
- Special circumstances such as bereavement
- Religious observance sanctioned by the school
- Educational or residential visit
- Public performance, music exams
- Attendance at another school e.g. to sit an exam
- Temporary exclusion

We will seek advice from the School Nurse for children who have frequent absences due to illness.

Absences will always be **unauthorised** in cases such as these:

- Lateness – arriving after the register is closed without good reason
- Oversleeping, getting up late
- Family holidays (see below)
- Finishing off homework
- Looking for uniform
- Minding the house, looking after other children or parent
- Haircuts and other salon visits

Leave of Absence during Term Time

The school holiday pattern, for the current year and following year, is given out to parents well in advance and both are available on the school website. Amendments to the 2006 Education Act have removed all references to family holidays, extended leave and the former statutory threshold of allowing up to ten school days leave per year for the purpose of a family holiday during term-time.

When considering applications for discretionary leave of absence, the Headteacher will now:

- be satisfied that the individual circumstances warrant granting leave;
- take into account the frequency of any such requests, the pupil's attainment, overall attendance and ability to catch up on missed lessons; and then
- determine the number of days, if any, a child can be away from school.

Examples of exceptional circumstances which justify approval could include:

- members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties
- emergency services personnel (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue) who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year
- other employees who are prevented from taking family holidays outside term-time, e.g. a parent working abroad on a fixed time-period contract
- the death of an immediate family member, e.g. parent or sibling
- a child or parent/carer receiving medical treatment abroad
- are required religious pilgrimage such as Hajj
- families who can evidence that they have experienced genuine disruption to their originally agreed return travel plans, e.g. severe weather conditions or civil unrest.

Further information can be found in the school's ***Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy***, which is given to parents at the beginning of the school year and is available on the school's website.

Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality is strongly encouraged. The school gates are open from 8.00am for pupils attending breakfast club. The school has an early opening time of 8.40am for all pupils to allow for a swift start to the school day. From 8.40am, the school is legally responsible for all children in the building and from 8.50am, any children on the premises. The register is taken at 8.50am. Any children arriving after 9.00am but before 9.30am are recorded as late. The register is kept open until 9.30am and any children arriving after that time are recorded as unauthorised absences unless there is a reasonable explanation for the lateness.

Children arriving late are recorded in the Late Book which is kept in the school office. The information in this book is used during weekly attendance monitoring meetings between the Pupil Premium Lead, Family Support Worker and Office Administrator.

Notifying Absences

Although most parents are very conscientious about phoning school to give a reason for their child's absence, from time to time they can forget. For this reason we have adopted a 'first day of absence contact policy' as follows:

1. If we have not heard from a parent by 9.30am a member of staff in the office will send a text message to the parent, asking them to ring school to confirm the absence and provide a reason for it.
2. If parents do not contact school after receiving this text, a letter is sent out the following Monday, again asking parents to give a reason for their child's absence. Parents are given two weeks to respond to this letter.
3. If no response to this letter is received then the absence is recorded as **unauthorised**. There are consequences for certain numbers of unauthorised absence - see below.

Absent/missing children

In cases where a child is absent and parents have not contacted the school to give a reason, the following procedures will be followed:

- Day 1 - school will seek to contact parents via text message
- Day 2 - a member of office staff will call the parent to try to obtain a reason for the absence
- Day 3 - The school's Family Support Worker will undertake a home visit to try and speak to the parent before posting a note through the door. The school will continue to try and make contact with the parents daily, up to the tenth day of absence.
- Day 10 - school will inform the Education Welfare Team, to report a 'Child Missing in Education' (CME) and complete the necessary paperwork. The Education Welfare Team will take the matter forward.

In certain circumstances, where punctuality and attendance is a concern, the Family Support Worker, at the request of the Headteacher, may conduct a home visit from as early as day 1 of the absence.

What happens in cases of poor attendance?

100% attendance is actively encouraged but the school understands that children can be poorly. Attendance of 95%+ is classed as **goodattendance**. The table below gives information on the 'trigger points' at which different courses of action take place:

94-91%	Attendance that drops below 95% but above 90% is classed as satisfactory . If a child's attendance drops below 95% but above 90%, by the end of the first half term, a letter will be sent home to parents informing them that their child's attendance has reached an unacceptable level and that it is being closely monitored on a weekly basis by the Headteacher. Parents may be invited to attend a School Attendance Planning Meeting with the Family Support Worker (and the School Nurse if appropriate) to discuss the problem and to see what support the school might be able to offer to help. The immediate aim is to avoid the classification of 'persistent absence' – see below.
---------------	--

90%

90% is the DfE's current threshold for **persistent absence**. This is the point at which a child is officially referred to as 'persistently absent' and school are obliged to refer the case to the Local Authority Education Welfare team. This may lead to a formal warning being issued to parents of a possible Fixed Penalty Notice. These currently stand at £60 per parent as long as it is paid within 28 days. Payment after this time, but within 42 days, is £120 per parent. If a Penalty Notice is not paid more than 42 days from the date of issue, prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act will normally be instigated as a matter of routine.

One school day counts as two absences (morning session and afternoon session). It is important to note that, 10 unauthorised absences in any one term (5 days) and/or 14 unauthorised absences (7 days) over two consecutive terms is sufficient for the LA to issue a formal warning of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices are only issued as a last resort, in cases where it is clear that a child's education is suffering as a result of their poor school attendance.

Reporting to Parents

Attendance report cards are sent to parents at the end of each term as follows:

- GREEN attendance report cards go to pupils who have achieved good attendance- 95%, or better. These pupils should be congratulated on their record of attendance;
- AMBER attendance report cards go to pupils with satisfactory attendance rates-greater than 90% but less than the 95% minimum;
- RED attendance report cards go to pupils with persistent absence- lower than 90% attendance

A child's attendance record is reported in their annual report to parents/carers. However, parents/carers will always be contacted before this report is sent out in the summer term if there are any concerns regarding their child's attendance or punctuality.

Publishing Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

All schools are obliged to record and publish the number of authorised and unauthorised absences. The rates of absence are included in the school's prospectus and updated annually.

Equal Opportunities

Fundamental to the aims of the school is the understanding that all parents and children will receive equal entitlement without prejudice and that individual potential should be developed to the full.

We do not discriminate against any child or adult because of gender, age, ethnic origin, social class, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or special needs.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored regularly, to allow for amendments to statutory regulations, and reviewed every two years by the Headteacher in consultation with governors.

Mrs D Greenwood
Headteacher

June 2016

Approved by the Governing Board July 2016