



ST ANDREWS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

St. Andrew's CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and effective education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

The School will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and reports to parents.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and the St. Andrew's CE Primary School's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents), 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. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

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 the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) 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

- Excessive illness without medical evidence

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, never 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.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work, vital information from the teacher and general news for the day.

Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and take up valuable time of office staff for children that need to be escorted to class.

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50 am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.00 pm.

The afternoon registers will close at 1.10 pm

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day of absence. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

School Procedures

First Day Absence

Parents/Carers are required to report their child's absence by telephone **before 9.00 am**. (A message may be left on the school's answerphone). Please do not email the school as emails are often not checked until later in the day. This information will be passed onto the relevant class teacher and it will be entered into the attendance register.

Should a child be absent from the class at the time of registration with no explanation received, the class teacher or class based teaching assistant will inform the office before the end of the registration period. The School Administrator will telephone the Parent/Carer for an explanation.

If the parent/carer is still unavailable, the School Administrator will telephone named contacts from the child's data file.

Second Day Absence

If your child is still unable to attend school, please telephone the school again before 9am.

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation, a standard letter will be sent to the Parent/Carers asking them to contact the school immediately.?? (Would we do this or would we continue to call until it becomes a continuing absence - below???)

Continuing Absence

If your child continues to be unable to attend school, please telephone the school every morning until their return, unless you have agreed otherwise with the school.

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation, a standard letter will be sent to the parent/carers asking them to contact the school immediately.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Attendance and Engagement Team. (*This is a legal requirement*). The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the School Administrator to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the Parents/Carers. The Head Teacher will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward. At this point a parenting contract might be advisable, and will be drawn up in consultation with the Attendance and Engagement Officer.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance and Engagement Service to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Service may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/ Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period
- they allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation
- they fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday
- their child persistently arrives late for school after the registration is closed

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.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absenteeism mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent absentee (PA) pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance and Engagement Officer and could also be referred to them. If, necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including: parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. ***In very exceptional circumstances***, the school will consider authorising up to 10 days absence but parents must apply in writing fourteen days in advance to the Headteacher for permission.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance. Pupils with 100% attendance will be identified and a certificate of attendance will be posted home at the end of Term 3 (February).

At the end of the school year, pupils achieving the school target or better will be identified and a certificate of attendance will be posted home at the end of Term 6 (July).

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year.

The attendance targets for St. Andrew's CE Primary School are:

2017/18 – 96.5%

2018/19 – 96.8%

2019/20 – 97%

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

Register Security

The registers are securely stored in the School's Office.

Signed: Seb Hearmon (Chair of Governors)

Date: March 2021

Review date: March 2022

Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration