

St Saviour's C of E Academy

Attendance Policy

September 2021

Principles

At St Saviour's C of E Academy, we have a central role to play in every child's social, spiritual and moral development. We ensure this by promoting Christian values of honesty, respect, forgiveness, friendship, aspiration and perseverance as identified by the children, staff and governors. These values underpin this policy and its related practices.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by learners will be recognised appropriately.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. School opens at 8:50am till 3:15pm.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent (adult with parental responsibility).

The attendance policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the learner is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a learner of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been agreed. This includes:

- **parents 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**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage, asking for an appointment with the Principal or V.I.P. Education (Attendance partner) resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Workers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

Registration

All pupils can enter the playground at 8.50am (and should not arrive at school before this time as they will be unsupervised). Registration is at 9.00am. Pupils arriving after this time should enter school via the Main office.

What parents should do if their child is absent

Absence known in advance (e.g. Medical Appointment)

- Present medical letter to the office informing the school of the nature of the absence (reasons why) and when it will be taken.
- A phone call or email to the school office informing the school of the nature of the absence (reasons why) and when it will be taken.

Absence not known in advance

- Ring the school (*before 9.30am where possible*) on the first day of absence in order to inform the school and provide a reason and also an estimation as to how long the absence may be for.

If unable to ring – email or send a note into school as soon as possible detailing the nature of the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Lateness

We actively encourage all children to arrive at school on time and try to work in partnership with parents to ensure this. If a parent/carer is aware that they are going to be late and have a valid reason, then we ask that they follow the procedure below:

- Ring the school (as soon as possible) so that class teachers can be informed and prepare for the late arrival of the child.
- Children who arrive late to school (after 9.00am) must enter the building via the main entrance and are signed in.
- Children arriving at school up to 10 minutes after the register was taken will be recorded as **L** for late; with the number of minutes late recorded.
- Children arriving later than this period will be recorded as **U** which legally means they were absent and therefore unauthorised.
- At the end of each half term, a letter will be sent home to the parents of those children that have arrived late on several occasions.
- Reasons for lateness will be recorded on the electronic sign in system.
- The Education Welfare Officers from V.I.P. Education hold 'late gates' and issue notices to Parents/Carers who arrive to school late. This is done on a regular basis
- Schools and EWWs must now adhere to the 'Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices September 2017

Requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school

We follow Staffordshire's Local Authority Protocol in relation to requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school during term time. **(Copy of the form can be obtained at the school office).**

- Requests for leave of absence from school must be made.
- Parent/carer should complete a request form (which can be collected from the school office) and submit at least 2 weeks prior to the attended period of absence.
- Parents will be informed by letter as to whether leave is authorised or not. Pupils will be marked in the register as **G** if this is not authorised and this may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

Holidays in Term Time

In light of the new regulations and amendments to school attendance set by the Department for Education, the school will no longer authorise any holiday absence with effect from 1st September 2013. The DfE website states:

'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than 10 days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

This change in regulations means that Headteachers/Governing Boards no longer have the discretion to authorise absence from school for family holidays and can

only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Attendance Analysis

The school office and Leadership team regularly review and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individuals, groups and classes in order to target school improvement in this area. Wherever possible, action will be taken by the school to improve a child's attendance and investigate and address any underlying causes or problems before considering whether to make a referral to the Local authority.

School staff regularly meet with the V.I.P. Education to discuss any attendance concerns and also report any child whose attendance falls below 95% or 90%.

Attendance Initiatives

We believe that attendance is an important factor in the success of a child's education. In order to ensure consistency and progression in their learning development it is vital that children not only attend on a daily basis but also arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important however, that learners should not be in school if they are unwell and unable to cope with the daily learning. The school has adopted the following attendance initiatives in order to help us ensure a continuity of learning experience for our children and to further improve our attendance targets.

Communication

Key information regarding lateness, illness and absence is given to parents through the website and provided through letters. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason. Parents are encouraged to share any worries their child might have in school and to work in partnership with the school to address any issues or concerns.

Attendance Letters

Termly parents receive a letter indicating their child's attendance and how this compares to the school's own attendance target. Colour coded boxes visually highlight where their child's attendance falls within an agreed scale.

Attendance colour codes:

- 95% - 100% Green (Well done! This is excellent)
- 91% - 94% Yellow (Improvement)
- 90% or less Red 85% - 91% (Persistent Absence Pupil)

Class Attendance Celebration

Once a week the attendance records of each class are celebrated.

Termly Attendance Celebration

At the end of each term the attendance record of individual children is celebrated. Children with 100% attendance for the term receive a certificate. Children who maintain 100% attendance throughout the academic year receive a book of their own choosing.

Concerns

Poor Attendance

When a pupil's attendance falls below 95% parents will be informed of this to ensure any further unnecessary absences are avoided.

When a pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term they are deemed as a persistent absentee. A letter will be sent home and a referral to the EWO will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Truancy

All staff are concerned about learner's regular attendance and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They also strive to ensure that every learner's safety, welfare and happiness is at the heart of all decision making. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a learner to truant, if there is a concern that a learner might be truanting then the following action is taken immediately:

- Notify the Principal;
- Principal then contacts the parents either by phone or by home visit if possible;
- This is then followed up by notifying V.I.P. Education of the situation;
- The Principal, V.I.P. Education, Parents and learner concerned meet to discuss any reasons for the learner not wanting to attend school in an effort to resolve any issues and put relevant support into place;
- Actions decided are shared with all relevant personnel and put into place.

Targets

The school target is following indicates the targets agreed school for the academic year.

- **School attendance target for 2021-2022 – 96/97%**

The Principal will report termly attendance percentages to the Governing Body and report against the number of children in the school who have less than 90% attendance at the time of the report.

All staff have a shared responsibility in encouraging good attendance. They follow the school's positive behaviour management policies and practice in order to ensure that learners feel safe, cared for and positive about their experience of school.

GDPR Statement

St Saviour's C of E Academy employ V.I.P. Education Ltd. They are an Independent Education Welfare Company who work with the school, to raise attendance and deal with welfare matters. They will communicate with you if there is an issue, they can support us with. Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with V.I.P. Education if it becomes a cause for concern. V.I.P. Education are GDPR Compliant and will not share personal data with any third party.

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. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Written September 2021

Principal L Davis

Chair of Governors M Weller

Review September 2022

Signed



Signed

