



St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: November 2016

Review Date: Autumn 2020

*Journey together,
guided by God,
to do the best we can.*

Introduction

Most parents want their children to get on well in life. Children only get one chance at school, and their chance of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly. Poor attendees may not be able to keep up with school work or miss out on parts of the curriculum. This can affect their rate of progress and overall level of attainment. It's not only the academic work: missing out on the social side of school life can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on at secondary school. Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for the late child, the teacher and other children in the class.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.
- Be ready to learn by 9.00am (this means quickly walking to classrooms and putting away coats, bags and other belongings).

We expect all parents and carers to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their child of compulsory school age, who is registered at school, attends regularly.
- Ensure that their child arrives punctually by 8.55am and is prepared for the school day. (Please note the school gate opens at 8.35am and parents/carers are responsible for their child until they go into class).
- Take children to the school office if arriving after 8.55am to sign them in.
- Contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school.
- Inform the school by 9.30am, at the very latest, on the first day of the child's absence.
- Inform the school of the reason for absence by phone/letter/email/study bugs.
- Contact the school whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school.
- Book family holidays during school holidays.
- Arrange wherever possible for medical appointments to be made outside school hours and provide the school office with a copy of the letter or appointment notice. If this is unavoidable, then the child should be removed from school for the minimum amount of time possible. Please note that the time out of school will affect their overall annual attendance figure.
- Complete a 'Request from School in Exceptional Circumstances' form in advance of any time being taken out of school.

We expect the school (staff and governors) to:

- Promote good school attendance and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and monitor all pupils' attendance.
- Contact the parents or carers as soon as possible when there is unexplained or irregular absence.
- Liaise with the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) team over absence issues.
- Work with the Local Authority if the issuing of a penalty notice (fine) or a court prosecution, is required.
- Keep parents informed about attendance issues and report annually to them on their child's attendance record.
- Work with other local schools and agencies to improve attendance.
- Keep to DfE and local authority guidelines.
- Set and publish attendance targets if statutorily required.
- Inform the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) team of attendance and persistent absence data reports as required throughout the academic year and make available for Ofsted, as required.

The Local Authority expects:

- OFSTED to pay special attention to primary schools that have an overall attendance rate of less than 95%.
- The school to consider referring a pupil to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation team for legal action if there are 10 unauthorised sessions in a 10 week period.

Absence from Learning

The school strongly advises parents and carers to encourage good attendance in order to minimise any disruption to their child's education. Holiday absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short. Whether the absence is exceptional is at the Headteacher's discretion. The DfE guidance and legal regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If a 'Request for Absence from School in Exceptional Circumstances' form is not completed in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. The procedure for requesting absence from learning will be:

1. The parent or carer will obtain a "Request for absence from school in exceptional circumstances" form from the school office or website prior to the absence.
2. The parent or carer will fill in and return the form to the school office, prior to the absence, which should include a full explanation of why the request is exceptional.
3. The Headteacher will decide whether to authorise the absence in line with this policy, local guidelines and DfE guidelines.
The Headteacher will consider:
 - The form and any letters from the parent or carer.
 - The age of the pupil.
 - The time of year proposed for the absence (and the impact on the planned curriculum and assessment).
 - The nature of the absence and the parental wishes.
 - The overall attendance pattern of the pupil.
 - The pupil's stage of education and progress.
 - The Headteacher may request to meet the parent(s) to discuss the form. The Headteacher will return the form (signed by the Headteacher or the Deputy in the Headteacher's absence) to the parent or carer, indicating whether authorisation is given.
4. The Headteacher has the authority to authorise absences that are unavoidable at short notice (e.g. a funeral).

Encouraging Attendance

The school will ensure that parents are well-informed about attendance issues through:

- Letters to parents, weekly parent bulletin, half termly newsletters, school website, phone calls and/or individual meetings with the Home School Link Worker (HSLW).
- Publications such as the Home-School agreement, Parent Handbook and Prospectus.
- Parent consultation evenings (as appropriate).
- End of Year School reports (more detail if concerns are evident).

The school will encourage good school attendance and use incentives where appropriate. The school will work with individual pupils and their families where absence is an issue to give one-to-one support, advice and incentives to improve motivation to attend school.

School Organisation and Procedures (For school use only)

Teachers (or Teaching assistants) will:

1. Open the school gate promptly at 8.35am (Usually this is the Head, Deputy or SENCO).
2. Close the school gate as soon after 8.55am as is safe to do so. Children who are within sight of the school gate, even if it is after 8.55am should be let in and sent to the school office.
3. Direct or take children arriving after 8.55am to the school office to be signed in.
4. Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils twice a day. The register should be taken between 9.00am and 9.10am in the morning and 1.00pm and 1.10pm after lunch.
5. Inform the office of any reasons for absence if known e.g. holiday, medical or illness.
6. Inform the office or HSLW of any unexplained lateness or absence that needs further follow up.
7. Be alert to, and report to the Head/Deputy, the early signs of disaffection which could result in non-attendance.
8. Inform the Head/Deputy of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

The Office staff will:

1. Ensure that the class register has been completed and saved by 9.10am in the morning and by 1.10pm after lunch. Follow up if not.
2. Record reasons for lateness (including number of minutes late) and/or absence on the SIMS system.
3. Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence.
4. Contact parent(s) as soon as possible if their child is absent and a reason has not been given.
5. Try phoning any other contacts we have on record for the child, i.e. grandparents, neighbours etc. if contact has still not been possible after lunchtime registration on the second day.
6. Refer to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if no explanation or satisfactory response regarding the child's absence has been received. The SLT will follow guidance issued from the Department for Education in the Children Missing Education document treating each case on its individual merits and a decision will be made ensuring all facts of the case are taken into account. This information will then steer what action should be taken next and whether external agencies need to be contacted.
7. Monitor and record the type of absence for each child with an explanation from parents where provided.
8. Inform the Head/Deputy of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

The Head/Deputy will:

1. Highlight school attendance in assemblies, bulletins, newsletters, publications and on the school website etc.
2. Ensure that the above procedures are adhered to.
3. Support staff in encouraging and maintaining good attendance.
4. Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.
5. Monitor overall attendance in conjunction with the Governing Body.
6. Evaluate policy including effect of pupil incentives and parent information.
7. Compare the schools attendance record with similar schools, the local authority average and nationwide data.
8. Liaise with the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation team about persistent late comers or non-attenders.
9. Use the local authority self-review/action plan materials (This may include extending the red-amber-green scheme to individual classes/individuals).

The Governing Body will:

1. Monitor attendance – overall figures.
2. Evaluate policy including effect of pupil incentives and parent information.
3. Review the attendance policy regularly (every 4 years).
4. Set attendance targets for each academic year in conjunction with the Head, if required.