

St. John's C of E (VA) Primary School **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Date: Autumn 2021
Frequency of review: Annual
Reviewed by: Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee

Philosophy:

At St. John's School, our vision: 'That all may love learn and Flourish underpins all we do. The ethos of the school and the planning of the broad curriculum, promote the attitudes and values necessary for individual children to contribute positively to their own personal development, and therefore to that of the school. St. John's is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We expect good attendance and punctuality from all pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents/carers to ensure that this is achieved.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and all children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any lateness/absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular lateness/absence will seriously affect their learning and may leave them vulnerable to falling behind. Any pupil's lateness/absence also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

The Education Act 1999 states that "***parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly***". As a school we will do our very best to support all parents in achieving this. We work hard to ensure that the school's ethos and environment encourage pupils to want to attend school through providing effective teaching and a relevant and interesting curriculum.

Aims of the policy:

This aim of this policy is to

- achieve high attendance for all pupils at St. John's. Good attendance helps children to make good, consistent progress in their school work.
- instil in pupils a commitment to attending regularly, helping them to develop positive habits that will continue to be a pattern for them in their later life, at secondary school, college and work.
- ensure that parents/carers are fully aware, and are regularly reminded, of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- encourage parents to approach the school for support should they be facing hardship or barriers to good attendance

Punctuality:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and registers are marked at this time. Pupils who are not present for registration, but arrive before 9.25am will be marked as late. Parents can drop their children off from 8:35am when the doors will open.

At 9:25am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a child arrives after that time he/she will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a persistent late record, the school office will make contact with the parents/carers to discuss this. Should lateness persist, they will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem. If lateness remains unresolved, the matter will then be referred to our Education Welfare Officer who will support you in improving this.

Parents/ carers can also approach school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Absence:

Parents/carers should contact the school by notifying all absences as early as possible on the first day and all subsequent days of an absence.

Any absence which is known in advance, for example, hospital appointments, should be notified to the school in writing beforehand, with the appointment letter or card from the hospital.

Every half- day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason and **can include:**

- Sickness;
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours;
- Days of religious observance;
- Leave of absence agreed in advance by the Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances (see below for procedures);
- Leave to sit exams or school entrance tests.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone;
- General family holidays
- Any absence which the Head Teacher has not authorised;

For illness absences that exceed 5 days or repeated spells of illness absence. The school may request medical evidence in order to continue authorising illness absences past this point. Medical evidence can include a GP note, appointment card, hospital letter, or a copy of your child's prescription/medication.

Applications for Leave of Absence during term time.

Permission must be granted by the Head Teacher for any leave of absence (including appointments) during term time and requests should be made on the Application for Pupil Leave of Absence form available from the school office.

The Law states that the Head Teacher can only grant leave during term time in "exceptional circumstances". There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. In making a decision the Head Teacher will consider each application individually.

We must warn parents that should parents take an unauthorised leave of absence (permission not granted in advance by the Head Teacher) the case may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

School Responsibilities

The school is responsible for completing the register each morning and each afternoon. The school is also responsible for monitoring the attendance of each pupil and identifying pupils whose attendance is below 95%.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence and every subsequent day if we have not heard from them;
- Follow the school absence procedure detailed in the flow chart in Appendix 1;
- Follow the Children Missing in Education guidance from Croydon Council should a pupil's absence go unexplained and exceed 10 school days;
- Endeavour to carry out home visits where there is a safeguarding concern regarding a child who is persistently absent;
- Refer persistent absentees to the Education Welfare Officer.

There are a number of reasons (including absence) for which we need to contact parents/ carers. Therefore, we need to have up to date contact numbers at all times. Parents/carers should please make sure they inform school when any of their contact details change.

The Role of the Education Welfare Officer

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, they may refer the matter to the Local

Authority for sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The EWO is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their contact details are available from the school office.

A child leaving the school

If a child is leaving St. John's, we require notice in writing from the parents/carers stating the name and address of the new school the child will be attending and any change of address if the family is moving house. This is so that we can forward academic records to the new school. If we do not have the forwarding details of the new school within two school weeks we would have to register the child as missing in education with the local authority. If a parent/carer is thinking that their child will be leaving the St. John's we ask that parents/carers make an appointment to see the Head Teacher as soon as they know the move may be happening.

If a child is moving abroad, the school has a duty to automatically refer this to the Children Missing in Education department. We therefore ask that parents provide proof of flights, new address and new school details if known, prior to leaving St John's. We are unable to remove a child from our register once they have left without permission from the Local Authority.

School target for attendance 2021-22 97%