

St John the Baptist Church of England (VA) Primary School



Loving learning, Building
Community, Growing in faith

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Attendance Policy

Review

This policy was reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team in September 2022 and will be reviewed every 3 years.

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Signed: Trudie Colotto, Head Teacher

Introduction:

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important:

- The education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE)
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

Aims of the Policy:

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

Objectives of the Policy

- To meet the Governments attendance targets
- Create a clearly understood procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days

Attendance Welfare Officer's Responsibilities

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school
- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Have appropriate registration processes in place
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences

- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
- To report to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance
- Contact parents if a child's attendance percentage drops

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at **8.45am**
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave of absence Form**' giving the reason for the request
- In some circumstances, submitted Leave of Absence Forms may also need to be evidenced by flight booking/holiday confirmation if the leave request is in relation to a family holiday
- To work with the school and the EWO to improve lateness and attendance
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:
 - Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
 - Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide you with reports at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through weekly and termly stickers/certificates.

Understanding types of absence:

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. **Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.**

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold will affect your child's attendance. **Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost).**

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must contact the school before 8:45am or as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Absence can be reported either by calling 0116 270 9932 or by completing the absence reporting form on Weduc.

The Education Welfare Office reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

If your child is absent the Attendance Welfare Officer will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- If we do not hear from you on the first day absence the attendance welfare officer and a member of the senior leadership team will conduct a home visit
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, the Attendance Welfare Officer will visit your home to establish that your child is safe. The Attendance Welfare Officer will leave her contact details and may inform the Police if no contact is made by the parent/carer to the school.
- Email or call you to discuss any emerging patterns of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Attendance Welfare Officer and/or the Headteacher* if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Severely Absent (SA):

A pupil becomes "severely absent" when they miss 50% or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, local authority and other partner's, and the appropriate educational support and placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and social care will be informed and may conduct a full children's social care assessment.

The school monitors all pupil absence thoroughly on a daily basis. Any case that is seen to be dropping or is at risk of moving towards the **PA** mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. All pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Law states that the parent/carer must ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they are registered. Should your child fail to attend school regularly legal action may be taken against you.

Once a child is registered in school, attendance is compulsory from the term after a child's 5th birthday until the **last Friday in July of the academic year in which the child turns 18 (Year 13)**. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child, when of statutory school age, accesses education appropriate to age, needs and ability.

Under the terms of the education related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, parent/carer(s) *may* be issued with a **Penalty Notice of £60** if:

- You fail to ensure that your child attends school, or other education provision regularly
- You allow your child to take leave of absence in term time without school's authorisation
- You fail to return your child to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
- Your child is found out of school, without permission, on two "Truancy Sweeps", within the same school year
- Your child persistently arrives late for school after the register is closed

Lateness:

Lateness can disrupt the learning of others and can result in a pupil achieving poorer outcomes.

- Research shows a close link between attendance at school and a child's achievement.
- Being late adds up to a loss of learning.
- All time out of school affects learning and achievement for pupils.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8:45am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.
- Registers are marked by 9:05am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

- At 9.05am the registers will be closed. If a pupil arrives after registration has closed the absence will be recorded as unauthorised for that session. If this persists, legal action in the form of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 may follow.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Welfare Officer and/or the Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Penalty Notices:

These are issued in appropriate cases, in accordance with the locally agreed procedure, where: -

- 20 or more absences occur in a 12-week period (including holidays)**
- A Penalty Notice may be issued for holidays where permission was not granted or sought.**

One day counts as 2 absences: that is 1 for the morning session and 1 for the afternoon session.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Penalty Notices from 1st September 2013

The rate per parent per child will be £60 if paid within 21 Days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Attendance Welfare Officer:

The role of the School's Attendance Welfare Officer is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils in the school by monitoring their attendance.

The Attendance Welfare Officer will liaise and support parents if attendance becomes an issue by: -

- Notifying parents/carers if their child's attendance is dropping below the Government target of **97%**.
- Contact parents to ring and discuss if a pattern of absence is identified.**
- Invite parents/carers to a pre-panel/**support** meeting to avoid the Education Welfare Department becoming involved.
- In very exceptional circumstances, collect children from the family home if parents/carers need support.

However, if all measures have been put in place and their attendance continues to decline, the Attendance Welfare Officer will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer. You then may be invited to attend a Panel Meeting led by the Education Services.

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 resolved

in this way, the school will refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. 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, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed 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. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school).

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Office 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 on 0116 454 5510. They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk

Absences during Term Time:

Holidays are not authorised by the Leicester City Council. The Education Department in the United Kingdom, states that **all holiday absences should be recorded as unauthorised**. See information below.

Parents may request an absence for extenuating circumstances. This is done through a proforma available on Weduc. A written response is sent together with a printout of the child's attendance record. The letters and responses are held on file in the office.

"The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Statutory Instrument No 756) amends regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, also states that; "Head teachers are prohibited from granting leave of absence except where an application has been made in advance and they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application". Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

In line with these regulations and the Leicester City Council Policy, **a penalty notice MAY be issued**, in the event that you do take your child out of school during the time requested.

Application for term-time leave of absence:

Applications must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides using the Weduc form headed 'Leave of absence request form'.

- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances.' Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period
- If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.
- **Religious Days of Observations are authorised for one day only. Any further absences, for the same reason, will not be authorised. An application must be made into the office before the allocated date is due to be observed.**

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. **The Attendance target for the school is 97%**

Children with attendance less than **90%** are considered to be persistent absentees.

Children with attendance less than **50%** are considered to be severe absentees.

St John the Baptist Primary School expects all pupils to achieve excellent attendance, at least **98%**.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided on Weduc and we ask for your full support.

Promoting Good Attendance:

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by:

- ✓ Awarding a cup for each phase (3/4, 5/6) on a half term basis for the classes with the highest attendance.
- ✓ Awarding an attendance bear for FS2/KS1 on a half term basis for the class with the highest attendance.
- ✓ Rewarding the classes with extra play time.

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.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	These are Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Security of Registers:

The School Registers are computerised and are "backed up" nightly on a drive in SIMS.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss E Power	Attendance Welfare Officer	0116 270 9932
Mrs M Green	Business Manager	0116 270 9932
Mrs T Colotto	Head Teacher	0116 270 9932

Leicester City Council Education Welfare education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk