

ST ANNE'S C.E PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Growing Together as a Family of God

Date: Spring Term 2019

Review (date): Summer 2024

St Anne's C.E. Primary School Wandsworth

Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction and Background

St Anne's C.E. Primary School recognises that positive behavior and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the *head teacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, the School Educational Welfare Officer and parents. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.

- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (although you will be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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 using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absence includes:

Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.

- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the attendance register
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave- 5 days unauthorised absence will lead to a penalty notice being triggered by the Local Authority
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

School Attendance and the Law

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school.

At St Anne's C.E. Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

- Being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

If leave of absence is authorized the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

We will not agree leave during term time:

- At any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- During assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year
- Whilst any child may occasionally have time 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 a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse, Local Authority Officers or Child and Family Support Worker.

Requests for absence from school for work

A license from the local authority needs to be applied for requests for absence from school. The school will only recommend such requests if the pupil's attendance is above the national average for that academic year.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent/carer.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Local Attendance Adviser, Home School Liaison Worker, Local Authority, Family Solutions or Social Care. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programs, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent/carers must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.00 am clearly stating the reason for the absence. If the child is ill the exact nature of the illness e.g. the symptoms should be given. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or call into school personally and speak to the office staff
- If your child has poor attendance below 96% you will need to provide a medical note from you doctor as to the reason for the absence. If a medical note is not submitted the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If we have not heard from you by 9.15 am then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is then we will make a home visit. However, if we still haven't been able to get a response then we will report it to the Educational Welfare / police as your child will then be classed as a 'missing child'.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 96%
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our School Welfare Officer, Child and Family Support Worker or Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority to request a formal School Attendance Meeting if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

The Missing Education and Child Employment Service

Parents 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 Local Authority. Local Authority Officers work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world

How we manage lateness:

The gate opens at 8:40am, the classrooms are opened at 8.45am. At 8:55am the gate will close and the registers are taken promptly at **9.00 am**. **If your child is not in class by 9am they** will receive a late mark. Children arriving after 9.00 am are required to come in to school via the school office and provide a reason for being late. Their time of arrival and reason for lateness will be recorded. The school will send home 'late notes' in order to keep parents and carers informed.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they 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**. This may mean that **you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists**. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Welfare Officer and/or Child and Family Support Worker, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality. If pupils arrive late to school, this disrupts their school day and impacts significantly on their learning. Core lessons are taught in the mornings and children arriving late miss the input for core lessons and find it difficult to participate fully in the lessons alongside peers who have been at school on time and are settled ready to for the school day. Arriving late can also lead to embarrassment, anxiety and worry for the child, entering a classroom where all their peers are already engaged in learning, can lead to disruption and distraction throughout the school day.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving St Anne's CE Primary School, *other than at the end of Year 6* parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils.

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, on time, every day.

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