



# St Laurence Church Infant School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

This Policy sets out the responsibility of the school and all those associated with the school in respect of Attendance and Punctuality.

### Principles

The Governors and staff recognise that the maximising of good attendance is a key task for St Laurence Church Infant School, if pupils are to take full advantage of opportunities at the school. The co-operation of all concerned, including parents/carers as well as school staff, is vital to ensure full attendance and good punctual timekeeping. By sustaining a culture in which full attendance and punctuality is the norm, the school will demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff, the value placed by the school on full attendance and punctuality and encourage children to gain the full benefit from their education.

Emphasis on attendance and punctuality also demonstrates the school's concern for individual children by contacting parents/carers to enquire about any unexplained absence.

### School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. Requests must be made in writing. If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

### Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

#### Governing Body

It will be the responsibility of the Governors to oversee and monitor the working of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

## **Headteacher**

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- Initiate and monitor procedures for monitoring attendance/lateness.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated on the day they occur, or as soon as possible after the absence.
- Monitor attendance and lateness on a regular basis and report to Governors
- Keep staff and children informed of the progress of policy and practice

## **Class Teacher**

It will be the responsibility of the Class Teacher to:

- Encourage attendance/punctuality by creating a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere.
- Keep daily registers and ensure that parents'/carers' letters/messages are passed onto the Office Staff as soon as possible.

## **School Office Staff**

It is the responsibility of Office Staff to:

- Follow up all unexplained absence/lateness
- Inform the Headteacher of unexplained absence/lateness
- Enter attendance details onto the school MIS system and produce reports as necessary

## **Parents/carers**

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to:

- Ensure full and punctual attendance at school when the child is fit to attend thereby instilling good attendance habits.
- Comply with the school's procedures for reporting absence/lateness
- Inform the school of reasons for non-attendance before 9 am on the first day of absence either by letter or by telephone call
- If any child is to arrive late in school, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible (again before 9 am).
- When the child does arrive late, the parent/carer must provide a reason for this.

If attendance is unacceptably low the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with parents/carers to improve the child's attendance using the approved Birmingham Local Authority Procedures (Fast Track to Attendance). In the first instance this If attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

## **Procedures**

- Children are expected to attend regularly and to be on time for registration and lessons
- Children are expected to arrive at school no later than 8.55am
- Children may not arrive at school before 8.45am
- Any child arriving after 9.00 am must report to the School Office with their parent or carer.
- Any arrival after 9.05 will be registered as a Late Arrival.
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It is accepted that on occasions it is not possible for a child to attend school, in which case:

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to seek authorisation for the absence or to provide an explanation for the absence by way of a letter, email or telephone call to the school office.
- If the school does not receive prior notification or subsequent explanation for the absence, then the school will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Only the Headteacher may give approval for absence.
- The parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from school at any time.
- Parents should provide an explanation for absence as soon as possible, with parental contact being made with school before 9 am on the first day of absence, providing further information by letter or telephone as necessary
- The parent/carer of any child arriving after ~~8.55am~~ 9.00am must report to the School Office
- Any child arriving after 9.00 must be accompanied by a parent/carer, who will provide reason for their late attendance to be entered in the signing in records.
- If a child becomes ill at school this must be reported to the Headteacher or senior member of staff if the Headteacher is out. The Headteacher or Senior member of staff will decide whether the child is too ill to remain in school.
- If a child needs to leave school for an appointment the parent/carer must advise the school office or class teacher in advance office staff will sign the child out.
- The parent/carer should seek permission from the Headteacher or senior member of staff if the Headteacher is out for absences due to exceptional circumstances.

### **Persistent Absence Procedure**

Persistent absence is defined as below 90% attendance

We recognise that it is crucial that all absence is monitored an action is taken at the earliest possible opportunity to support children and families where attendance and punctuality is an issue.

Where attendance falls below 92% after the first half term a letter from the headteacher will be sent outlining the school concerns.

If attendance continues to be problematic, the parents will be invited to school for an informal meeting to explore the reasons.

- Where there is an underlying medical condition a referral to the Schools Health Advice Service for an assessment may be suggested.
- If the child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, but there is no evidence of an underlying medical condition, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised.

In line with the "Right Help Right Time" thresholds, children whose absence falls below 90% will be considered to have additional safeguarding needs and be placed on the "Children with a Safeguarding Vulnerability" list,

The voice of the child will be sought to identify their lived experience, using the "Signs of Safety and Wellbeing" guidance.

The school will determine whether an Early Help response is needed to address any unmet safeguarding needs. This will be developed with the parent/carer and may take the form of a multiagency Early Help Assessment to formulate an "Our Family Plan".

Parents will be informed of which absences will be authorised and which will not.

If Early Help is needed, a minimum of six weeks will be given for the support to improve attendance.

If attendance doesn't improve, the school will follow the "FAST-track" attendance procedures as recommended by the Local Authority:

- A formal "School Attendance Review Meeting" will be called and an action plan will be created. A recording form will be kept for evidence.
- If following the School Attendance Review Meeting there are further cases of unauthorised absence totalling ten sessions over the previous 12 months, the school will send each parent separately a "Formal Warning Notice" and an up to date copy of the "Legal Action" leaflet which explains the legal process which will be followed
- Should the child have a further ten sessions of unauthorised absence within 12 school weeks of the warning being issued, the parents will be referred to the Education Legal Intervention Team.
- The Education Legal Intervention Team and Court Section will consider court proceedings under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act which could result in a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.
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### **Rewards/Celebrations**

At the end of every academic year excellent attendance will be celebrated by the presentation of a letter of congratulation.

For the purposes of determining "excellent attendance", children with a special educational need or disability will not be penalised for absences relating to their individual needs.

### **Evaluation and Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a change in guidance, and will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Policy approved 14/02/17

Revised March 2018

Reviewed April 2019,

Revised November 2020

Every child to learn and grow with God