



# School Primary Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

## Introduction

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At All Saints C of E School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. Children receive encouragement from their teachers for being punctual and achieving good attendance. The staff respond to absence and lateness in accordance with the age and social circumstances of the child. Lateness and attendance is dealt with through parents rather than the child. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 make clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a Penalty Notice, which is £60 per parent per child up to 21 days. After 21 days and up to 28 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child.

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 £1000 plus costs.

### **Penalty Notices**

There are 2 types:

#### **Type A**

Used for Overt Truancy

Parentally condoned absence

Persistent lates – after registration has closed.

- A warning letter will be issued to parents informing them that their child must not have any unauthorised days off in the next 20 days.
- If they do a penalty notice fine of £60 per parent per child will be issued.

#### **Type B**

Unauthorised holidays in term time

Unauthorised delayed return from extended holiday.

- Parents will be issued an instant penalty notice of £60 per parent per child

### **What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?**

#### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Please be aware 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 in to 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 is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery.

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

### **Lateness**

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with a school representative and the EWO. Parents are informed and reminded of the school dates and times in a number of different ways throughout the school year. The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings and early morning learning is stressed to parents. All pupils who arrive late have to sign in on arrival and an accurate log of their time of arrival is made. This log can be used as evidence if a prosecution through court proceedings is initiated as a result of persistent absence or lateness.

### **Procedures**

At All Saints C of E School the school day begins at 8.55am. School gates and classrooms are opened at 8.45am.

The register is taken once the children have settled into class. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark. The school gates will be shut by 8.55am. Children who arrive after that time must come in to the building via the main office, where they will be entered in to the late book.

The afternoon session begins at 1.00pm and the same procedures apply.

Parents are expected to call the school on the first morning of their child's absence using the dedicated attendance line. This is outlined in the School Prospectus.

### **If a child is absent without notification**

Where no notification has been received by 9.30am a call will be made by the family support worker/member of staff responsible for attendance.

If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the school will contact the EWO in order to check on the safety of the child.

### **Missing children**

If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

### **Notification of absence**

When the child returns to school, the parent or carer must explain the absence to a member of staff.

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, the parent or carer should notify the school prior to the day of absence.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 7 days, the absence will remain unauthorised.

### **Requests for exceptional leave of absence**

If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made as soon as possible before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office.

The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application. For details see [Exceptional Leave Policy](#).

### **Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness**

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. The school will also contact the EWO, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Penalty notices will be issued in respect of unauthorised absence (i.e. parentally condoned absence, persistent late arrival at school, overt truancy) if a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in any 5 week period.

A child becomes a '**persistent absentee**' (**PA**) when their attendance falls below 85% at any time during their school life. All children whose attendance has fallen to 85% or are at risk of becoming persistent absentees will be monitored rigorously.

### **All PA children are automatically dealt with by the EWO (Education Welfare Officer)**

It is recognised that poor school attendance can be the result of difficulties faced by a child or family therefore a co-ordinated approach by a number of agencies can help these children and families. We have strong links with other agencies.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. Any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year will be rewarded with a £5 gift card.

The class with the highest attendance in each year group each week will be awarded the 'Attendance teddy' to keep in their classroom for that week.

### **Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

#### **Attendance Metrics to be used with parents %**

100% - Outstanding

98% - Excellent

96% - Good

95% - Average (minimum accepted)

92%-94% – Poor and Requires Improvement

92% or below – Unacceptable

90% & below – Persistent Absenteeism and Serious Concern. Will be closely monitored by the Local Authority and the school.

### **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance and the head teacher will produce an annual report. The governing body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.

The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported on the school's website and fortnightly newsletter.

The Admin Staff are responsible for monitoring attendance across the school, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, alongside the school Inclusion Leader and EWO, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they will report this to the headteacher.

Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

### **Review**

The policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Review Date: October 2016**

**Next Review Date: October 2019**

## Exceptional Leave

### Exceptional leave during the School Day

- Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible.
- Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.
- On return to school during the day parents must inform the school office so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.
- Parents should inform the school office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

### Exceptional leave during Term Time

We follow Legal Requirements and Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

**Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.**

### Requests for Exceptional Leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school **as soon as possible** before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an **Exceptional Leave of Absence Form**, which can be obtained from the school office.
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.
- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process. Each request for leave of absence will be responded to in writing, giving the reason for the decision.

Penalty Notices will be issued:

- If parents have not sought permission from the Headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term-time.
- If the Headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway.
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation and the pupil remains on the roll of the school.

### Review

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## APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This application must be submitted to the Headteacher.

The school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to **ALL** the children of the school community. A copy of this and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the School Office and from the school's website. Please note that you are expected to take family holidays during the school holidays and your child's absence for this purpose will be treated as an **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**.

Name of child	Class	
Proposed date(s) of absence	From: _____ to: _____	
Please give details and reasons for the proposed absence		
Signature of Parent/Guardian		Date: _____

Your application will be considered by the Headteacher. Evidence of travel bookings may be required including return flights. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

**If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

For official use only:		
Action	Initials	Date
Seen by Headteacher		
Headteacher's comments (e.g. in support or on attendance record)		