



Principles

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. There is a clear relationship between good attendance and good attainment.

All children should be at school and on time each day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Sometimes children are reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Should a parent or carer be concerned about the attendance of their child then they should, in the first instance, discuss the issues with the Class Teacher or the Headteacher.

Attendance at school is positively reinforced by all staff at All Saints CE First School. There is a weekly good attendance cup for the highest attending class; 100% attendance awards at the end of term and each academic year; mid-year and end of year attendance reports to parents; termly announcements for children with 100% attendance and updates in the school newsletter.

School Procedures

i) Registration and general attendance

The school day runs from 8.55am – 3.15pm.

Morning session: 8.55am – 12 noon

Afternoon session: 1pm – 3.15pm

Registers close 9.05am and 1.05pm respectively

Late marks (L) will be given for children arriving between 8.55am and 9.05am. Children arriving after this will be deemed as Unauthorised (U). Please enter school via the main office if the gate is closed.

Children should arrive at school no earlier than 8.45am. They should play in the playground until 8.55am when the bell is rang. Attendance registers are taken in the classroom when the children have entered school. Once the teacher is on duty at 8.45am there is no requirement for parents to stay with the children until the bell goes.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day to ascertain whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day/session of absence from school has to be classified as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness, another unavoidable cause or an absence from school pre-organised and approved by the Headteacher or delegated person.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'approval of leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day



All Saints CE First School - Attendance Policy

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Time off for holidays

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties in attending school should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way then the school or the parent may refer the child to the Local Support Team (formerly Educational Welfare). He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support. They are independent of the school and can give impartial advice if appropriate. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can also issue Penalty Notices (see Section iv) or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or imprisonment.

ii) What to do if your child is ill

Please inform the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by phone, leaving a message on the answer phone. If no notification has been received by 9.30am on the first day then the Office Manager will contact the parents or carer. For sickness and diarrhoea, the child should not return to school for 48 hours following the last bout. For other infectious diseases, the school will follow Community Health guidelines. Parents should continue to notify schools at regular intervals to give updates on the child's wellbeing.

Medical appointments are authorised upon confirmation of appointment in advance. We encourage routine appointments to be made out of school hours where possible.

iii) Requesting a leave of absence in term time

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect on September 1st 2013, now make it clear that Headteachers should **only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances.**

Amendments to these regulations also removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.

If parents feel that it is necessary to take their child/children out of school during term time then they should put their request in writing to the Headteacher, stating the reasons for the required absence. The Headteacher will consider the request and a response will be made, usually in writing. A discussion with the parent or carer may also take place regarding the child's current level of attendance and the impact any leave will have on his/her progress.

What are exceptional circumstances?

- Leave of absence due to an event whose timing cannot be controlled and which is of great emotional significance to the families involved will usually be deemed as exceptional. These instances should be limited in duration and infrequent.
- It may also be exceptional to grant leave in term-time to the children of service personnel returning from a long tour of duty or are unable to take family holiday during the school holidays due to military commitments.



The Headteacher will always look at each request on a case by case basis and ensure that the principles set out in this policy will enable them to work with parents to navigate the decisions in a fair and consistent manner.

Factors that will be taken into account when making a decision are:

- The nature of the event for which leave is sought
- The frequency with which requests are made for that child
- The length of absence
- The pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling

It is recognised that time together as a family is vital and time off to play and socialise is healthy. That is why there are long school holidays and every effort should be made to take leave during this time.

If the request for absence is approved then the child's absence will be marked as **AUTHORISED**. If the request is denied and deemed not to be exceptional then the child's absence will be marked as **UNAUTHORISED**.

Consequences of Unauthorised Absence

Occasional instances of unauthorised absence will have minimal impact on a child's school attendance record. The Office Manager continuously monitors attendance and reports to the LST on the 90% thresholds. The Headteacher will discuss poor attendance with the parent and try to agree strategies of improving it. Any child with 90% absence or less is deemed as being persistently absent.

Percentage attendance is monitored regularly and especially when leave of absence is requested. Percentage attendance will be looked at for the whole academic year and if leave is requested early on in the Autumn term then attendance from the term before will be taken into consideration.

iv) Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003 empowers Local Authority Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue/request Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. In law, an offence occurs if a parent fails to secure their child's attendance at school and when that absence is not authorised by the school. A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.

Triggers:

- Penalty Notices will be considered where there are at least 20 sessions (10 days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous term. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- Where there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in the current academic year or previous academic term.
- Persistent late arrival at school i.e., after the register closes, in the current and previous term. 'Persistent' means at least 20 sessions of late arrival.



All Saints CE First School - Attendance Policy

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An 'excluded child' is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

Fines and Payment Period:

- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this, but within 28 days, is £120
- None payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996
- Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent (whether living with the child or not) of each child whose attendance meets the criteria e.g., two parents of two children at the same school could have four Penalty Notices. $£60 + £60 \times 2 = £240$

v) School Attendance Target

The school attendance target is currently 96%. This is agreed with the school Governing Body. Termly attendance figures are reported to the Governors and checked by the Local Support Team who monitor school attendance and request lists of those children whose attendance is below 90%.

Staff Responsible for Attendance

Mrs Andrea Kenny, Headteacher, is responsible for attendance at All Saints CE First School and is supported by Mrs Lesley Flannagan, Office Manager who monitors attendance and reports to the Local Support Team.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to ensure their children attend school. All staff are committed to working with parents and carers in a fair and consistent way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1 - Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices Jan 15 v6