



School Attendance Policy

St. Andrew's C of E Primary School

November 2016

Attendance Policy

1. Rationale

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents / carers and the school staff should work in partnership to ensure children have full and equal access to all that school has to offer.

As a school we will encourage parents / carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

2. Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support children and their parents / carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer;
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Take steps to ensure attendance meets or exceeds Government targets.

3. Expectations

It is important that we have shared expectations of school attendance.

We expect that all children will:

- Attend school every day;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend, appropriately prepared for the day;
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents / carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9.30am if their child is unable to attend school;
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect school will:

- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality;
- Monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents including medical appointment cards and notes;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through certificates and awards;
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality, referring irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the EWO.

4. Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to the other children in the class. The main playground is supervised from 8.35 am and children go into school at 8.45 am.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child;

- Registration takes place twice daily at 8.45am and 1.05pm for Key Stage 1 and 1:20pm for Key Stage 2. Registers will close 10 minutes after they have taken place. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session.
- Children arriving after 9:30 will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Children's attendance is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

5. Child leaving school during the school day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the children are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time.
- If children attend medical or dental appointments at the start of the school day, thus being absent for the register, but return promptly to school by 10am, the school is able to change their attendance code from M (absent for medical appointment) to present at school.
- If children attend medical or dental appointments in the middle of a morning or afternoon session they will be marked as present for that half day provided that they leave school just before the appointment and return promptly afterwards;
- Parents are requested to confirm in person at the office or with the class teacher, or in writing by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- When a child is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the office before the child is allowed to leave the site;
- Children must be signed out by an adult on leaving school and be signed back in by an adult on their return;
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted and then the police if the child is not quickly found, unless the child is deemed to be at risk of harm, in which case the police will be called first.

6. Leave of absence during term time

In line with the Government's 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised unless circumstances **strictly** meet those described as 'exceptional'. These are stated as:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an **immediate** holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;
- The holiday is a unique, one-off, never-to-be-repeated occasion **which can only take place at the time requested** (but not because it is cheaper at this time);
- The parent is a member of the armed forces on leave from active duty abroad and can only have a family holiday during this period.

This means that it is not possible to authorise a normal family holiday for any other reasons, including on the grounds of cost, available dates for flights or particular holidays and because it is difficult for parents to take leave from their work during school holidays. Where leave of absence is due to exceptional circumstance, an application must be made in writing, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the child's previous attendance and whether or not the time requested exceeds five school days in any one academic year. If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

7. Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will be issued by Cambridgeshire County Council for unauthorised leave when:

- A child's attendance falls to 90% or below in a four week period that includes the holiday and if the child has had any unauthorised leave in the past three years.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (per parent per child for each holiday) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

8. Monitoring Attendance

The Office Manager monitors attendance. The Headteacher and the Office Manager meet regularly to review attendance.

If a class teacher has particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, they should inform the Headteacher.

Attendance is formally monitored by the Headteacher, Office Manager and Educational Welfare Officer each half term. The school has adopted the following Local Authority procedures for attendance below 96%:

- 96% attendance Letter 1 (where appropriate – depending upon circumstances)
- 95% - 94% attendance - Letter 1 or Letter 2 (where appropriate – depending upon circumstances), a school meeting requested, and recorded, and a CAF offered
- If attendance still deteriorates letter 3 will be sent, which is now a Penalty Notice Warning letter advising that school will monitor attendance over a 4 week period and if there is more unauthorised attendance and overall attendance is between 86% and 89% a Penalty Notice Fine may be issued by Cambridgeshire County Council. Attendance at 85% and below, mostly unauthorised over previous 6 weeks requires a referral for an Educational Welfare Officer to follow formal processes.

A register of letters issued to individual parents can be found in the Attendance File.

The Headteacher will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer where there are other or more immediate concerns over attendance. Formal referrals are made using the Statutory Intervention Form.

Governors set annual targets considering both the national average and benchmark data for schools with similar Free School Meals. Attendance data is reported to the Full Governing Body in the Headteacher's termly report and is evaluated against the target.