



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

June 2017

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is founded on Christian values, inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus. In partnership with families and our local community, we respect, nurture and encourage every child and adult to reach their potential. We are proud to be a loving, inclusive and happy school, where children can safely and confidently find their place in the world.

### Introduction

St John's actively encourages regular attendance. It aims to maximise attendance rates for all children and secure high levels of punctuality. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. Failure to ensure this could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. It is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously the problems that may lead to non-attendance.

### Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

#### Safeguarding

By law, schools must take a morning (8.45am) and afternoon (1pm) register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Registers are checked daily in the office by the school's attendance team. When the registration period closes at 9.15am, any parent who has not contacted the school to report their child's absence will be telephoned and asked why their child is not in school. This is to check the safety and welfare of all pupils and to ensure that parents are in fact aware that their child is not in school.

#### Absence

The Headteacher monitors the attendance of every pupil each month. Each half term, parents receive a colour coded letter, informing them of their child's attendance figure and if it is causing concern.

Red - 90% or below

Yellow - 90% - 95%

Green - 95% +

The Department for Education sets the threshold at which a child is considered to be a persistent absentee. From September 2015, that figure has stood at 10%. Parents/carers whose children are considered a persistent absentee are issued with a red letter and invited to come into school to discuss ways of improving attendance.

#### Lateness

It is important that classes make a calm, prompt and effective start to the school day. Lateness into school causes disruption, not only to the child arriving late, but to the other pupils and the teacher. The main gate is open from 8.30am and pupils can go straight into class. No supervision for pupils is available before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. Registration is called at 8.45am and closes at 9.00am. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked 'late'. Where persistent lateness occurs, the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers.

#### Education Welfare Service

The Headteacher meets termly with this service, to discuss individual pupil attendance and to highlight any causing concern. The service also monitors the school's overall attendance figures and challenges the Headteacher regarding

steps that have been taken to improve absence rates. The Headteacher may refer a child to this service if their attendance or punctuality does not improve following school intervention. The Education Welfare Officer will arrange a home visit to discuss strategies for improving attendance and to explain potential next steps that the service may take. It is the law that every child of statutory school age attends school and the Local Authority may take legal action against the parents, including a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

### Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established or there is good reason to doubt the explanation given, it is recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers are requested to complete an Absence Request form (see Appendix 1) at the office, for all planned absences.

### Illness and Appointments

Whenever possible, parents/carers are expected to make routine appointments (eg. medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not possible, a copy of the appointment time must be given to the office and the absence will be authorised. For pupils who are ill, parents/carers must telephone the school each day that their child is absent and then this too will be authorised. For pupils who seem to be persistently ill or there is a pattern/trend to their illness, advice from the Education Welfare Service will be sought and parents/carers may be requested to bring medical proof (eg. doctor or prescription note) that their child was indeed ill and unable to come to school.

### Holidays and Other Absences From School

The Headteacher can only agree to absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances which warrant it (eg. a funeral, religious observance or wedding) and if the pupil in question currently has an acceptable level of attendance. The Headteacher can also only consider requests made by the resident parent/carer. Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents/carers must be aware that cases will normally be refused.

The Education Regulations 2013 removed the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise 10 school days for a holiday. The fact that holidays are generally cheaper during term time does not count as an exceptional circumstance. Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority, to each parent for each child (see Appendix 1).

### Child Missing From Education (CME)

Aside from the educational losses for a child missing school, there are significant safeguarding concerns when the school does not know the whereabouts of one of its pupils. The school will attempt to make contact with a parent/carer for each day that their child is absent. After 10 school days with no response, a pupil is deemed a CME and the Headteacher has a statutory duty to report the absence to the Local Authority and Education Welfare Service. They will investigate the absences and work with the family for a prompt return to school.

### Attendance Incentives

St John's welcomes all its pupils into school and aims to ensure that they feel valued and missed if they are absent or late. In addition to the procedures for addressing poor attendance, the school has systems for reporting and recognising good attendance.

- Weekly certificates for the best attending class
- Individual pupil 100% attendance certificates every term
- Individual pupils with 100% attendance and best attending classes are placed on the attendance tree display
- Headteacher's certificate for 100% attendance for the whole academic year
- Attendance rates and information for parents/carers on the fortnightly newsletter

### Flexi Schooling

On occasion, parents/carers wish their child to spend part of their education time in school and the other part being home educated. The Headteacher and Governing Body of St John's will not consider requests for flexi schooling.