

St. John the Baptist R.C. Primary School

Attendance policy



Approved by: Lisa Campbell

Date: 23.1.2024

Last reviewed on: Spring Term 2025

Next review due by: Spring Term 2025

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. Staff at St John the Baptist RC Primary School seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. School will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of this policy.

Aims:

- To maximise the attendance of all our children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams

What is expected of parents?

- To keep their child's absence to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To avoid taking children out of school during term time for holidays
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important times such as assessment weeks and SATs tests
- To support their child and recognise successes and achievements
- To keep school updated should contact numbers or address details change

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office on the first morning by phone or in person if their child is absent from school. This needs to be done before the close of registration at 8.55am.

What is expected of school:

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable school to identify, follow up and record authorised and unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act

- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage communication between home and school
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO

Authorised Absences include:

- Genuine sickness, hospital appointments, dental appointments, religious holidays.

Where possible medical and dental appointments should be arranged during holidays or outside the school day. Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day and that an appointment card or letter is brought into the school office as evidence. Where attendance of pupils has been identified as an area of concern the school will insist on seeing such evidence before authorising the absence.

Unauthorised Absences include:

- Family holidays in term time, parent/s unwell, shopping, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut or any absence that the school has not been informed about.

School supports the view that every day in school makes a difference and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. **Parents must request permission before taking their child out of school in term time.** An 'Application for Leave of Absence from School' form can be collected from the school office.

DfE guidance to schools is very clear on term time family holidays. Schools **ARE NOT** expected to authorise family holidays and as such **any** holidays taken in term time will be marked as **unauthorised** and may also result in a penalty notice being issued. Each application is considered individually and in line with the 2006 Education Regulations; which state that '.....*Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.*' At St John the Baptist RC Primary, parents of pupils will be issued with a fixed penalty notice if the holiday is for 5 days or more and the absence is marked as unauthorised.' Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120. Both parents will be issued with the Penalty Notice and they are per child, not per family.

Applying for Leave of Absence:

Parents must provide school with a completed Leave of Absence form prior to their child being absent from school. These are available from the school office on request. If school do not receive a formal request for leave of absence, then the Head teacher will refer to the safeguarding policy, as the child will be regarded as a 'child missing education'. Parents must understand that this may result in a referral to children's social care, as school have a duty to safeguard all children.

Response to Absence:

- If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact parents by telephone or text message – if parents do not contact school to inform of absence, the absence will be marked as unauthorised
- In some cases school staff will continue to check each morning with the parents on each subsequent day that the child is absent (parents should keep the school informed daily)
- At the end of the week, if no absence reason has been received and contact with parents has not been achieved, this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and / or Children's Social Care
- If your child is absent from school due to illness for 5 days or more, school will require medical evidence if we are to authorise this illness

At each stage of this process, parents are invited in to speak to the Pastoral lead if they have specific concerns or issues.

Following regular monitoring of absence figures, parents may be invited in to school to discuss long or regular periods of absence with the Pastoral Leader, Headteacher, School Governors and the Education Welfare Officer.

Lateness:

Work in classes starts at 8.50am, school doors are open from 8.45am. Lateness is classed as any child arriving after 8.55 a.m. when registers close. All children arriving after 8.55am must report to the school office. A child arriving after 9.05 a.m. will be marked as unauthorised.

Arriving after the registers close will result in your child receiving a late mark for the session or if after 9.05 a.m. an unauthorised absence. Persistent levels of unauthorised absence due to lateness may result in a penalty notice being issued.

Lateness is monitored weekly and letters are sent home to the parents informing them of the lost lesson time and disruption caused to the child and the class as a whole. If the lateness is persistent then the school will seek to meet or speak with parents to discuss our concerns. Cases of persistent lateness will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Service

St John the Baptist RC Primary works together with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all our children. Our target attendance for this academic year is 96% and whilst the majority of our children achieve this, there are a minority who do not. There are different strategies used by the Education Welfare Service to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from attendance assemblies, informal visits, target days, penalty notices and ultimately court action. All staff at St John the Baptist RC Primary hope that any attendance issues or concerns can be resolved long before court proceedings are instigated.

Persistent Absentees

A child who has an attendance figure of 90% or below is classed as a persistent absentee and will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and will be invited in to school for a meeting to discuss attendance concerns.

A child who has an attendance percentage between 90% and 95% will be closely monitored and supported to prevent them falling into the persistent absentee category. As such they may be referred to the EWO and the school will also request medical evidence for further absences. The school may also draw up an Attendance Action Plan Agreement. These agreements would be drawn up with the support of the family and actions for both school and for parents would be agreed upon so that we can work together to improve a child's attendance.

Penalty notices will be issued when a child has 10 days of unauthorised absence (20 sessions) across a 12 week period. These may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, including holidays during term time, inappropriate parentally-condoned absences, persistent late arrival at school (after 9.05 am) and where no reason for absence is provided. Penalty notices can also be issued when pupils are located in a public place without justification during the first 5 days of any period of suspension.

To support families and prevent attendance from declining further, school will refer to the 'Fast Track to improve attendance' panel at Riverside. There, parents will attend an action planning meeting with school and the local authority Education Welfare team.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Daily

Registers are kept electronically at St John the Baptist RC Primary and monitored daily by the Pastoral Leader. Details of all absences and lateness are recorded. A log is kept of all text and telephone correspondence between parents and school.

Weekly

Attendance and lateness data is reviewed weekly by the school's Pastoral Leader and Headteacher. Any long term or patterns of absence are identified and responded to by contacting parents and requesting a meeting with the Pastoral Leader, Headteacher, School Governors and the Education Welfare Officer.

Letters are sent to parents whose children have had 2 or more lates over a period of a week.

Letters are sent to parents whose children have been absent and not provided school with a reason.

Monthly

Letters are sent to parents of children whose attendance has fallen below 95% and also to those whose attendance has dropped below 90% and in this instance parents are invited in to meet with the Pastoral Officer.

Termly

100% attendance badges are presented to the children in the final assembly of the term.

Yearly

100% attendance certificates presented to the children in the final assembly and all names entered into a prize draw.

Signed: ...L Campbell..... (Head teacher) Dated: ...23.1.24.....

SignedE Skilling..... (Chair of Governors) Dated: ...23.1.24.....