



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

*Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.*

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE August 2013.

### Values

St James CE Primary Academy believes that good attendance and punctuality are extremely important if children are to thrive in school. As a Church of England academy we have a strong commitment to providing a nurturing environment, supporting families through our Christian ethos and expecting the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils.

### Aims

1. To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
2. To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
3. To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
4. To ensure all stakeholders, pupils, parents, governors and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

5. To keep accurate, up-to- date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
6. To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
7. To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## Rights and Responsibilities

### The Legal Framework

There are legal obligations on:

1. The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
2. The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
3. The Local Authority to provide education and enforce attendance.

### Headteacher

1. To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
2. To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Staffordshire County Council policies and procedures.
3. To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Staffordshire County Council policies and procedures.
4. To meet with the school administrator to monitor data and respond to findings.
5. To liaise with external agencies where necessary.
6. To work with teachers to plan for the re-integration of pupils after long term absence.
7. To revise and amend the policy, as required.

### Staff

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1. To complete the formal register of attendance and punctuality twice daily at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm (reception, year 1 and 2) or 1:15p, (year 3, 4, 5 and 6)
2. To regularly remind children and parents/carers about the importance of good attendance.
3. To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
4. Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance form children.
5. Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
6. If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
7. Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
8. To promptly inform the Headteacher, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
9. To feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

### **Parents**

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness, (e.g. mild headache, stomach ache, cold), parents should inform the school and bring them in. If a child continues to feel unwell or the condition worsens, school will contact the parents immediately so that the child can be collected. If parents have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know as soon as possible. Appointments such as optician appointments should be arranged for weekends or school holidays. Pupils should be brought back to school after the appointment. It is important that pupils miss as little time as possible.

### **Therefore, parents/carers are expected to:**

1. Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
2. Promotes a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.

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3. Not arrange medical, dental or optician appointments in school time wherever possible.
4. Telephone school to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child and each day after that.
5. Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
6. Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

### **The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:**

1. Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
2. Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
3. Ensure that parents/carers are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
4. Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

## Strategies for Promoting/Rewarding Excellent Attendance

At St James CE Primary Academy, we use a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

1. Celebration Assemblies
2. Weekly newsletter
3. Breakfast and After School Club
4. End of year rewards for 100% attendance.
5. Parent/teacher consultations

## Monitoring and Recording Attendance and Punctuality

Morning Register

## St James CE Primary Academy

Class registers are accurately recorded in each class register book. At 9.00am the registers must be checked for accuracy and submitted to the school office.

Registration is open until 9.25am.

From 9.00am the school gates and entrances are closed. Children who are late must report to the school office and the registers are up-dated. Pupils arriving at school between 9.00 and 9.25am will be marked as 'late.' Pupils arriving after 9.25am are marked as 'unauthorised.'

The Office Manager checks the registers and begins first day of absence calls. The registers are then put onto our SIMS system.

### Afternoon Register

Registers should be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch and before afternoon lessons begins.

### Punctuality Records

The Office Manager and Headteacher regularly monitors punctuality. The Headteacher will speak to parents who are late and offer support. If lateness does not improve then the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service.

### Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/ carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Office Manager follows these procedures:

1. Phone parent/carers' contact number(s).
2. Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
3. Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carers and up-date the school system accordingly.
4. Headteacher to speak to parent/carers at home time, if they are at school to collect other children.
5. Speak to parents/carers face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
6. If no contact can be made the school would contact the Education Welfare Service or the Safeguarding Team.

### Extended Holidays

## St James CE Primary Academy

Leave of absence for pupils during term time is not authorised. St James C E Primary Academy recognises that taking children out of school is detrimental to their education and may constitute a safeguarding risk. The school will make necessary enquiries in order to be satisfied that a pupil is not at risk.

Headteachers/Principals may now only grant leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, for example but not limited to:

1. Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil.
2. Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil.
3. Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery.

### Penalty Notices

Parents and children will be supported by the school, the Local Support Team and Education Welfare Services to overcome barriers to regular attendance. Therefore Penalty Notices will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem.

The Education Act (1996) empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Headteachers, (as well as Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them), and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school.

**Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 states:**

*If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.*

(Please refer to **Staffordshire Local Authority Cd of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices.**)

Review by C. Dobson (Principal)

**Date: September 2016**

**Reviewed: September 2018**

**Next Review: September 2020**