



## All Saints Church of England Primary School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR PARENTS

**Purpose:**

To ensure and maintain good attendance, as this is essential for a child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Date of issue:** Sept 2013

**Date for review:** Jan 2016

**Reviewed by Governors' Welfare Committee on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

#### Introduction

100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent, inform the school of the reason for absence.

#### **Why?**

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DFE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
  - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
  - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved an absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

### **Aims of the Policy**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

### **Objectives of the Policy**

- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents / carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

This policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as possible.

### **School Responsibilities**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents / carers have not communicated with the school initially with a first day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents / carers of what constitutes authorised / unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absences and lateness.
- To report to the Attendance Officer and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 9.00am.
- To inform school on every day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Request for term-Time Leave Form', giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and the Attendance Officer to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

### **The Process for Monitoring Attendance**

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Head teacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

**Stage 1:** Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school write to the parents / carers.

**Stage 2:** If the concerns persist a second letter will be written and the school will invite the parent/carer to a meeting with the Head teacher

**Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the *Local Authority* Attendance officer.

**Stage 4:** If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer to deal with on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the LA Attendance Officer will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action. See *Appendix 1*.

### **Absences During Term Time**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

*Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the LA Attendance Officer. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.*

AS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to the maximum of £1000 plus costs.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

## **Lateness**

### **Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

- Children must be in class by 9.00am each day. A bell rings at 8.50am and children can come straight into class. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Registers close at 9.10am. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school class doors will be shut by 9.10am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be asked to sign their children in.
- Lateness will be monitored and the Head Teacher will follow this up.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.10am, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside school hours or during school holidays.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Headteacher.

## **Illness**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's / consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

## **The Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

The Attendance Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However the Attendance Officer also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

Somerset County Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents where children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Head Teacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months.
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice for the first offence.
- Issue a Penalty Notice without warning.

The Fast Track framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent and specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 12 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

## **Governors**

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

**APPENDIX ONE:**



**All Saints Church of England Primary School**

**Request for Term-Time Leave**

**HEADTEACHER: Mrs Paula Park - B Ed (Hons)**

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM AND READ INFORMATION**

**OVERLEAF:** The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013: Regulations 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Pupil Name:

Date of Birth:

Class/Year:

Home Address:

First date of absence:

Date of return:

No. of school days absent:

Exceptional reason for absence:

Name of parent  
(with whom child resides)

Home tel. no.:

Mobile Tel.no.:

Email address:

Signature of parent

**Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.**

**NB. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance.**

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**FOR HEADTEACHER**

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Date received:

Current attendance:        %

Last year's attendance:        %

Exceptional reason accepted        Yes / No

Name & Signature

Date parent informed:

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**THIS ABSENCE HAS BEEN AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED**

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**Application for leave of absence during term time  
(Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013)**

All Saints C of E Primary School, the Local Authority and Government believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the absence by the Headteacher.

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:**

**Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.**

As a result of the changes All Saints C of E Primary School have revised our attendance policy, which from the 1<sup>st</sup> September will include the following:

- Application is to be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

**AS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.**

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to a maximum of £1000 plus costs.

Note: Parent also includes guardian / carer.

**Appendix Two**



**HEADTEACHER: Mrs Paula Park - B Ed (Hons)**

**LETTER OF REFUSAL**

Dear

**Name of Child:**

**Re: Request for Term Time Leave**

You have requested \_\_\_\_\_ School days leave.

Your request for term time leave has been carefully considered but unfortunately it has not been possible to authorise it for the following reasons:

The reasons are not considered exceptional

The leave has not been requested in advance

Other


Signature  
(Headteacher) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix Three**



**HEADTEACHER: Mrs Paula Park - B Ed (Hons)**

**APPROVAL LETTER**

Dear

**Name of Child:**

**Re: Request for Term Time Leave**

Thank you for your request for term time leave.

I am in agreement this is for exceptional reasons and have authorised this leave.

The leave is from

to

Should the leave be extended for any reason, the extension may be regarded as unauthorised absence which may be used in any legal action for poor school attendance.

Signature  
(Headteacher)

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Date

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