

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



Life in all its fullness

Attendance Policy September 2023

- A happy, healthy and safe place to learn how to look after our bodies and minds
- A well led and governed school

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SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Attendance matters...”

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 96%
- Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- We will endeavour to instil the Christian values of self-discipline and resilience.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing/Leaving a voicemail or emailing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child is expected to return. These communications are recorded on the child’s file allowing us to authorise absence.
- Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks and bringing appointment cards or other evidence of appointment into school. These communications are recorded on the child’s file allowing us to authorise absence.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or email if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness. These communications are recorded on the child’s file allowing us to authorise absence.
- Ensure your child arrives promptly at 8.45am

We shall:

- Offer the services of our Attendance Officer who can support pupils returning to school.
- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls on the first day of absence for the children we have concerns about and the 2nd day for all other children.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters and on the school website.
- Publish our attendance rate in the school newsletter and on the school website.

- Publish individual children’s attendance rate on their annual school report.
- Let parents know if we have concerns regarding their child’s attendance through our new structured letter system sent out by our Attendance Officer.
- If we continue to have concerns, make a referral to Targeted Support Services.
- Check attendance and punctuality data on a weekly basis.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example, if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. Evidence for these circumstances will lead to authorisation.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are *not* permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Holidays during term time
- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- When there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. Targeted Support Services may contact you and legal action can be against you if your child has unauthorised absences.
- A letter will be sent home enquiring why an absence occurred, stressing the impact of unauthorised absence on a child’s school record.

Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8.50am. The school day begins at 8.45am when the bell is rung.
- It is very important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.

- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfCS guidance. Late arrivals more than 30 minutes (9.15am) will always be unauthorised.
- We will write to you to let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety, if not collected or the school not contacted by school closing time. (This would be either the Police or Social Care.)

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils' miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement by law to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the board of governors.

It is our policy:-

- That Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term time holidays need to fill in an application form well in advance.
- That if the Head Teacher does not agree and you take your child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A *good* understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom. The Leave of Absence form is available from the office.

Legal Note

By law, all children become compulsory age at the beginning of the first term they following their 5th birthday. Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department of Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

“Every day counts...”

Reviewed: September 2023

Review : September 2024

Received by staff : Mrs R Whitt

Governor : M Bardwell