



St Nicholas
C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy



Review: December 2016

Next Review: December 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavor to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps attendance registers that record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. Registers will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly undermine the school's efforts to raise standards.
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following: -
 - How the school encourages good attendance
 - How the school monitors attendance
 - Authorised and unauthorised absences
 - Holiday absence in term time
 - Role of the Education Social Work Service and ACE (Attendance and Compliance Enforcement)

2. ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- 2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.
- 2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset parents are encouraged to take an active role in the work of their school and to share and support their children's enthusiasm. Among the variety of commitments parents agree to undertake within the Home-School Agreement, regular and punctual attendance is prominent.
- 2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.
- 2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

- 3.1 By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- 3.2 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.
- 3.3 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.
- 3.4 Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.
- 3.5 The Head of School monitors the attendance of pupils each term. Attendance will be periodically reviewed, where there are initial concerns, parents/carers may be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the School's target of 97%. If attendance continues to drop, a 2nd letter will be written informing parents/carers that attendance will be monitored over a six week period. Should attendance levels not improve, or if the Head of School remains concerned, a meeting may be arranged to discuss appropriate support and to set further monitoring period. The School will refer a pupil to the ACE team if a child's attendance is below 85% and school support is not proving effective.
- 3.6 Returns of school data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.
- 3.7 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

4. PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

- 4.1 The Head of School monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The playgrounds are not supervised, doors open at 8.45am for Key Stage 2 and 8.50am for Reception and Key Stage 1.
- 4.2 Registration takes place at 8.50am for Key Stage 2 and 9.00am for Reception and Key Stage 1 and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school. Registers close at 9.20am and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Afternoon registration is taken at 1.10pm for Reception and Key Stage 1, 1.15pm for Lower Key Stage 2 and 1.30pm for Upper Key Stage 2.
- 4.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Executive Headteacher or Head of School will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will

arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to ACE.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- 5.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a statutory requirement for the headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. This decision is made by the Executive Headteacher and Head of School.
- 5.2 Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.
- 5.3 If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. For the majority of parents the normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.
- 5.4 **Unauthorised** absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

- 6.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- 6.2 Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- 6.3 Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- 6.4 Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- 6.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- 6.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- 6.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County

Council.

6.9 The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>)

6.10 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

6.11 **Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

7. Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance
- If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

8. ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE GOVERNOR

8.1 The attendance governor will act alongside the Executive Headteacher and Head of School to monitor the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc) and ensure that this policy is being followed.

9. ROLE OF ACE

9.1 On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Head of School will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the problem drop below 85% then a referral to the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement department (ACE) will follow. The function of ACE at this stage is the **Compliance / Enforcement** part of the service which delivers the Local Authorities statutory response where attendance has fallen below 85%.

10. IN CONCLUSION

10.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

10.2 St Nicholas C of E Primary School greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The School is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.