

# **St John's C of E Primary School**



# **Attendance Policy**

January 2023

## Introduction

We want all our pupils to enjoy coming to school and want parents and carers to feel confident in leaving their children in our care. As a school, we are committed to supporting our families to achieve these things and in doing so ensure all pupils have regular and punctual school attendance.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

## Parents and Carers

You have the legal responsibility for ensuring your child's good attendance. We politely ask that you:

- Contact the school office by the Parent Mail app or phone message on the first morning of any absence and keep us updated.
- Explain the reason for any absence so that our registers are accurate.
- Inform us in advance of any medical appointments in school time. E.g. speech therapy, hospital. Please bring a copy of the appointment letter into the office.
- Make regular medical appointments (opticians, dentists etc) outside of school time where possible.
- Talk to us if your child is reluctant to come to school for any reason.
- Make requests for authorised absence and holidays in writing to the Head Teacher only when there are exceptional circumstances as these requests are not automatically authorised.

If your child seems unwell in the morning but then recovers after a little more sleep or medicine, you are welcome to bring them into school. We understand that making a decision early in the morning can be pressurized for parents and carers.

**We have a responsibility to keep our children safe.** When we ask you to tell us straight away why your child is off school, we are not being nosy, we are making sure that you and your child are safe at home. There have been instances, in other parts of the country, where a child has not come into school and unbeknown to anyone, they have been at home with an injured or seriously ill parent and unable to get help.

**If we do not hear from you when your child is absent, we will firstly try to contact you and other named contacts that you have given us. Secondly, a staff member or an Education Welfare Officer may visit your home. Finally, the police may visit and undertake a 'keeping in contact' check.**

### Coming to School is Important

Children who attend school regularly are able to make good progress in their learning. It also helps children to build friendships. Good attendance is encouraged by staff and celebrated in school.

Teaching and support staff have a vital role in encouraging regular attendance and punctuality. They may be able to address concerns that parents and children have which are barriers to good attendance. They may notice patterns or have concerns about something a child says. These concerns should be logged on CPOMs. CPOMs is our internal safeguarding recording system.

### Being on Time is Important

Morning routines in the classroom are in place to help children settle. Class teachers use SODA (start of the day activities) to revise and revisit key areas of learning.

Children who are late should enter school through the main reception where they will be marked on the register with a late code. Children arriving later than 9.30 will be given an unauthorised code.

### Children with Medical Needs.

We are committed to working with children with medical needs and their families. Each child's circumstances will be different and we can be flexible and provide support to help the child be safe and well in school. Should children require long or regular periods of time off school, we will work with the child, family and medical staff to make a support plan in the best interest of the child.

### Our Monitoring

Attendance of all children is checked on a daily basis by office staff. We also undertake weekly, termly and yearly reports to identify concerns. These are monitored by a member of the SLT with responsibility for attendance.

### When we are Concerned

Patterns of low attendance, unauthorised attendance, declining attendance or lateness concerns us. We will often speak to parents and carers informally to 'nip it in the bud' and address any barriers to their child coming to school.

Other steps may be will be writing to parents more formally and including a copy of their child's registration certificate. At that stage, we are likely to require medical evidence for all absences. We may also invite parents or carers into school to discuss attendance or punctuality. If

concerns continue or are more significant, the Education Welfare Service would become involved and begin following their own procedures and policies which ultimately include prosecution of parents and carers.

When we are concerned about a child's attendance or punctuality, we may work with other schools where siblings attend and other agencies such as Early Help professionals or social workers.

At all stages, our priority as a school is to work with children, parents and carers to turn a situation around and achieve punctuality and regular school attendance.

#### What is an Unauthorised Absence?

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

#### And Finally...

Keep talking to us. No problem is too small or too big. We are committed to making school safe and enjoyable for children.