

**ST ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY**

ATTENDANCE POLICY



2018

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

High attendance and punctuality are essential if a child is to make the most of their time at school. Obviously we wish to encourage high attendance since regular absence will have a detrimental effect on a child's education. We are especially concerned with punctuality, as late arrivals during teaching time can seriously disrupt a lesson. A continuity of approach is needed as Government legislation requires schools to monitor and take action against absenteeism and unauthorised absence.

AIMS

1. To make the children and their parents aware of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
2. To comply with government legislation regarding attendance.
3. To avoid unnecessary breaks in a child's education.
4. To improve punctuality and attendance.
5. To establish good routines of attendance and punctuality.

BROAD GUIDELINES

It is the roles and responsibilities (in respect of attendance, absence and punctuality) as follows:-

Governors – monitoring, reporting to parents and contribution to prospectus.

Head Teacher/ Deputy Head /Key Stage Leaders/ Inclusion Manager– monitoring, checking registers, analysis, action planning

Teachers – to inform the Head Teacher/ Deputy Head / Assistant Head/ Inclusion Manager of children who are repeatedly late and to maintain an accurate register of attendance (concerns can also be shared at staff briefing)

Class -encouraged to attend and be punctual (celebrated in assembly)

Pupils – encouraged to attend and be punctual

Parents – to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time.

To address issues relating to attendance, absence and punctuality for either new staff or new children, the following approach to be adopted:

New children will be given an attendance letter and new staff will have the information provided in the staff handbook.

The school will send a text on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received by 10.00 a.m. Should the child be absent for several days with no satisfactory response after a phone call and/or a home visit for the Head Teacher and Deputy the issue will be passed to the Local Authority Education Welfare and Child Missing Education (CME) Team.

The EWO and/or Family Worker will be consulted where concerns are raised over a specific child in relation to lateness, repeated absence, hunger and any worries about the child's welfare or home environment. The school will work closely with the EWO if chronic absentees need to be re-integrated.

The Head Teacher will ensure parents are aware of the differences between authorised and unauthorised absences. Parents will be invited to complete a written application for leave of absence other than for reasons of the child's health / illness. Ultimately, it is the decision of the Governing Body as to whether a specific absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If a parent/carer offers excuses concerning their child's attendance or punctuality that cannot be accepted, then the Head Teacher will send a standard letter informing the parent/carer that their reasons are unsatisfactory.

Government legislation now specifies that parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without the school's permission. The government guidelines are as follows:

The Education Welfare Service has been issuing penalty fines for unauthorised absences on behalf of schools since the introduction of the fines in 2003 under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003.

Penalty Notices are an alternative to the existing sanctions available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, allowing parents to discharge liability for conviction for the offence. The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days from the date of issue.

In 2013 the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013 removed references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments made clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. So on behalf of schools the Education Welfare Service also issued penalty fines for leave taken in term time.

Following the Isle of Wight v Platt case in 2016, penalty notices for leave in term time was suspended until a decision was made by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court overturned the decision made by the High Court recently so the Education Welfare Service will be reinstating the issue of fines for holidays in term time.

Unauthorised leave for 10 sessions (5 school days) or more will qualify for a fine. No warning will be issued from the Local Authority because it is assumed that school will inform all parents that leave in term time will not be authorised unless it is exceptional circumstances. 'Exceptional circumstances' can be described as rare, significant, unavoidable and short and that the leave/absences could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. May I also remind you that schools need to clearly demonstrate that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given. Therefore your school attendance policy needs to reflect this and this information is also shared with the parents via newsletters, website, parents evenings/meetings. Without this the fine can not be issued.

If you need further information or details about the referral criteria please email EWS.Referrals@rochdale.gov.uk or ring Education Welfare Service on 01706 925115.

Liaison between the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, Inclusion Manager, class teachers and the school office team will be necessary to monitor and check the accuracy of the registers.

Letters detailing the importance of high attendance and punctuality are issued to parents of all children in school annually and referred to in Newsletters throughout the year.

Attendance will be monitored each week by the Head Teacher and half termly when an electronic summary report is generated by the office staff. Any links between absence and a child's ability, gender, ethnic origin, or the occurrence of 'special' or unusual events at the school, will also be monitored.

If a child arrives after the outer doors are locked and / or register is closed to the office then the child will report to the school secretary before going immediately to class. The secretary will mark an 'L' against the child's name and alter the dinner register accordingly. A register of children arriving late will be kept. Three late arrivals in a period of one week will be viewed as a cause for concern and the parents will be informed. Lateness after 9.05 am. becomes unauthorised absence. If absence is authorised it then cannot be used in court when dealing with a problem. Persistent or regular absence, therefore does need to be challenged.

Parents/carers have a right to see attendance information relevant to their child. They must contact the Head Teacher and be informed that a 15 days period may be required before the file will be available for inspection.

If any party is unhappy about aspects relating to attendance, absence or punctuality, a formal complaint must be made to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will deal with each case individually. If there is still no satisfaction, the party may then complain to the Governing Body. Ultimately, the case may be referred to the Education Authority.

A child who leaves school for any reason during the school day will be issued with a pass out stating the reason for absence. A record of all 'pass outs' issued will be signed by the parents and kept in the secretary's office