



St John's C of E Primary School, Lemsford

Attendance Policy 2017 -19



Policy Administration

Policy Author:	Herts LA and Headteacher
Ownership:	Finance and Personnel Committee
Last Review:	New Extended Policy
Next Review:	Sept 2019
Ratified By/Date:	16 th May 2017

Policy Objective

To promote and support excellent attendance at St John's School and ensure positive outcomes for pupils' attendance and learning.

Policy Statement

At St John's School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

St John's School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

St John's School aims to reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

St John's School believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

Policy Criteria and procedure for exceptions

1. Responsibilities: Parents and Carers

Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.



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Parents whose children are registered at a St John's School are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of this attendance policy
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to the non-attendance of their children
- notify school if their child is absent on the first day of absence.
- provide an explanation for the absence which should be confirmed, preferably in writing, when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- not book holidays during term time

2. Responsibilities - School

St John's School is responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

The school is required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For pupils of compulsory school age, the school is required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

The school will:

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. The school recognises that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. It also recognises the reluctance of some parents to come into school.

Punctuality

The school will take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality and lateness will be monitored and followed up.



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- School policies, brochures and the website will clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. The school will not keep a register open for the whole session.
- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and the parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

The St John's School Senior Leadership Team comprising the Headteacher, Deputy Head and senior leaders shall:

- ensure that legal requirements are met
- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- have a named member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance (Mrs Mandy Evans)
- identify clear channels of communication with parents
- identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence
- make provision for first-day of absence contact to be followed up by 9.30 am on the first day
- establish clear procedures to identify and follow up all absences
- prioritise the importance of early intervention
- identify a range of strategies to encourage whole school attendance
- promote the setting of targets for individual pupils, form groups etc.
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- be sensitive to individual pupils' needs
- be alert to critical times (e.g. secondary transfer)
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
- establish clear lines of communication with outside agencies
- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
- provide for effective primary-secondary liaison
- inform and involve governors about all matters regarding attendance and punctuality
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
- explain how attendance information will be shared with parents (newsletters, website etc)
- ensure that this attendance policy is reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents that it is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.
- make clear to parents what is, and is not, an acceptable reason for absence
- make clear to parents how lateness, both before and after closure of registers, is recorded and monitored
- make clear to parents that leave is granted only in exceptional circumstances
- address attendance from a whole school perspective.
- actively promote the link between attendance and achievement
- encourage all staff - including ancillary and administrative staff - to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- actively address all issues - such as bullying – which may lead to non-attendance
- explain to parents that the Local Authority will be notified of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly



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Attendance Information and Procedures

Doors open for school:

- Breakfast Club opens at 7:45am
- School doors open at 8:45 am .
- Pupils may enter the building at 8.45 am. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8:40 am

Registration

- Registers are called at 8.55 am and 1:15 pm. Registers close at 9:15 am and 1:30 pm. Registers are marked consistently by staff.
- Any pupil arriving after closure of the register will be marked absent for the whole of the session
- Pupils will be called by name and respond in the prescribed formal manner – 'here', 'present' etc.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance. See Absence and Attendance Codes January 2009, **Appendix A**

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after the school gates are closed at 8:55 am should report to the school office. Lateness will be recorded in the electronic register
- Late arrivals will be marked as 'in' on the paper register for fire safety reasons
- If there are extenuating circumstances such as a road closure, or bad weather, late arrivals may be authorised at the discretion of the Head or Deputy

Following up Lateness

- If a pupil is late more than 3 times per half term, the Headteacher or Inclusion Manager (AG) will follow this up with a discussion/meeting with parents or carers to ensure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality on outcomes for their child.
- Parents whose children are regularly late for school (more than 3 times per half term), will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent/s to bring about an improvement in punctuality.
- When needed, the Attendance and Inclusion Officer will be contacted to offer support to parents whose child has poor attendance

Absences

- Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school
- Designated school staff will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence. It is the school and not the parent who authorises absence

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement



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Absence will not be authorised for the following:

- Birthdays
- Holidays in term time unless in exceptional circumstances
- Any holidays requested after the event
- Pet going to the Vet / Death

The decision to grant authorised absence resides with the Head or Deputy Headteacher, in the Headteacher's absence.

Following Up Absence

- St John's School follows up all absences from school
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 9.30 am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted by the school secretary
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence after 3 consecutive days, a letter will be sent to the parent of the pupil by the Headteacher
- If a pupil returns to school after an absence without a written explanation from his/her parent and this has still not been received within 2 days, a letter requesting this will be sent to his/her parents by the school secretary.
- Parents whose children have more than 10% absence from school in a period of a term, will be contacted by a member of school staff
- Pupils whose attendance is regularly less than 90% will have an allocated mentor, an Action Plan/PSP and regular reviews of attendance until they have reached their target attendance. The Inclusion Manager and Senior Leadership Team will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in attendance.
- If the pupil's attendance does not improve sufficiently, the pupil will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer to support improving attendance.

Leaving and returning to school on the same day

- Parents who are unable to make appointments for their children out of school hours will need to let the school secretary know in advance of the appointment.
- Pupils will need to be signed out and back in when they return in the visitors register in the entrance hall.

Holidays in Term Time

- St John's School will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances
- Parents must request a family holiday during term time using a St John's School Request for Absence form, which can be obtained from the school office. Such requests must be made at least 2 weeks in advance
- Requests for holidays in SATS week for Year 6 will not be authorised

For further guidance refer to the **School Attendance Guidance** which is available from the school office.