



St Andrew's C.E. Primary School

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Attendance Policy

School Motto:

Respect, Achievement, Fun.

Mission Statement:

We celebrate the uniqueness of each child, educating and nurturing them in a safe, happy and Christian environment. We want each child to reach their full potential along a creative learning journey, providing exciting and challenging learning opportunities that will remain with them for life and enhance our future working community.

Introduction

At the heart of everything we do at St Andrews is children's learning. Children cannot learn when they are absent, however, and therefore we aim to ensure that our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We also want to continue to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils. The following policy and procedures were adopted in consultation with children, staff, governors, parents and the Education Welfare Consultant. It is very important that your child attends school regularly and on time, and this policy sets out how we can achieve this together.

Aims and Objectives

- To improve attendance and punctuality across the whole school
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence
- To encourage and value good attendance and punctuality
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school
- To offer parents additional support to challenge barriers to attendance if needed

The Education Act 1996

This states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of school age receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is now carried out by the Initial Assessment Team who provide a link between schools and families.

The school is required to inform the LEA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is

unauthorised. The Headteacher will notify the CAF Support Officer if there are concerns.

Pupil Registration

The school is required to maintain two registers:

- An admission register (the school roll)
- An attendance register

The admission register contains a list of all pupils at the school. The school ensures that an attendance register for all pupils on the school is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Examples of authorised absence:

- Medical or dental appointments (these need to be given in advance if possible and copies of appointment cards shown to office staff so that we can record confirmation of the appointment)
- Illness
- Religious festival (must complete a holiday request for this type of absence to be authorised)
- Wedding of parent or grandparent

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Hair appointments
- Shopping
- Head lice
- Birthdays

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences not properly explained
- Children who arrive after the register has closed
- Shopping, birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Our Learning Mentor, Mrs Austin is available without appointment to work with families to resolve attendance issues.

Parental Responsibilities and Involvement

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly. If a child does not attend regularly, parents should work closely with the school and the 'Early Intervention Team' to resolve the problem. Parents found guilty of school attendance offences could be subject to a penalty of up to £2500 and/or a period of imprisonment for up to three months, or alternatively the LEA could recommend that a parenting order be enforced. At St Andrews we encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards authorised absence in the home-school agreement.

Parents of new pupils are reminded of their responsibilities in the welcome pack, including pupils who join the school mid-year. The importance of good attendance is discussed at the New Intake evening as well. Pupils with PA are sent an additional letter in the first instance. A pupil with PA at St Andrew's is a pupil who has not attended for more than 15% of available sessions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss vital learning and information. Lessons are disrupted and this can be embarrassing for the child who is late. Being late for 10 minutes every day over an academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school. Morning registration will take place at the start of school. The registers will remain open for thirty minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival. Parents of children who arrive late regularly will be contacted by the School Attendance Officer, Learning Mentor or Headteacher to inform them of concerns and to support them to rectify the situation. If lateness is consistent and parents do not respond to support then a referral will be made to the Pupil Attendance Support Team.

Ten Day's Absence

The safety and welfare of our pupils is very important. Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Pupil Attendance Support Team.

Frequent Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence. The School's Attendance Officer will ring the parents to discover the reason for absence if school has not been contacted. This is to ensure the child's safety and a detailed log is kept in the office. The school will discuss with the school nurse those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons to see if further support is needed.

The expected target attendance of our pupils is 97%. If attendance falls below 90% and school has concerns, or if there is persistent absence the following actions will be taken:

Nature of Concern	School Action
No response to telephone calls made by school if school has not been contacted by parents	A card is posted to the home, reminding parents of their responsibilities. Possible home visit

No response after a 2 nd absence	A letter is posted inviting parents to a meeting in school with Headteacher and Learning Mentor
No response or concerns remaining	Attendance agreement signed outlining responsibilities and meeting
Lack of response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Below target following meeting - Concerns remaining 	Outside agencies are contacted to support school.

Patterns of attendance concerns are monitored by user-defined groups set up in SIMs. Pupils are welcomed back into school after absence, and are helped to catch up with any missed work and information.

Signing out

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedure for releasing children where parents/carers have informed us of an appointment in school time. A signing out procedure is required in order that everyone can account for where the children are and why. This book records the time and date of the appointment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using school strategies, the school will refer to the Pupil Attendance Support Team. This team can refer to Court Officers if the issues with attendance and/or lateness continue. A Penalty Notice may be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence. St Andrew's School adhere to the guidance on the marking of registers issued by the Local Authority pertaining to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to 3 per pupil, per parent, in any one school year. There will be no restriction on the number of times a formal warning may be given about the possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Unwarranted delayed relayed return from an extended holiday (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after register has closed

This is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered individually.

Penalty notices can now be applied for when a pupil has 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a term or 10 days (20 sessions) in two consecutive terms. School can also apply for penalty notices for absences across two academic years as per the trigger across two consecutive terms.

A formal warning will be issued initially to allow the parent/carer 15 days to effectively improve the situation prior to issuing a Penalty Notice.

Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service will issue Penalty Notices on behalf of the Local Authority in Lancashire. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, maintain home/school relationships and complement other enforcement measures.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by first class post (which constitutes good service) and never hand delivered. This will ensure that evidential requirements are in place and meet Health and Safety requirements by avoiding potential face-to-face confrontation.

Requests from schools and the Police to issue Penalty Notices will be considered by the Education Welfare Service provided that:

- All relevant information is supplied in the specified manner
- The circumstances of the pupil's absence meet all the evidential requirements of this Code of Conduct
- Family circumstances are set against the likelihood of securing improved attendance through the issuing of a Penalty Notice
- The issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies already in place or other enforcement measures already being processed.

The EWS will respond to all requests for the issue of a Penalty Notice within 10 school days, providing all criteria are met. The EWS will then either:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued
- In the same letter set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved

Or investigate other interventions that may be more appropriate.

Procedure for Withdrawing Penalty Notices

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- The Penalty Notice was shown to be issued to the wrong person
- The Penalty Notice was issued outside of this Code of Conduct
- When checking on payment after 28 days it becomes apparent that no offence has been committed.

Where a Notice is withdrawn, the requirements of Regulation 7 (2) of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 will be satisfied by the LEA.

Absence Notes

The school requires written notes or telephone messages explaining reasons for absence for every period of absence. If no explanation is received from a parent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Holidays in Term Time

The school actively discourages the taking of holidays in term time. Holidays booked simply for cheap family holidays are not permitted.

A request will be considered inappropriate if:

- The child is in Year 2 or Year 6 (because of national tests)
- Prior to testing in Years 3, 4 and 5
- There are existing or historic attendance concerns
- It is thought that the child's educational progress would be put at significant risk as a result of being absent from school

How to apply for a holiday:

The parent/s* apply for holiday absence during term time via the school holiday form, available on line or from the school office. The Head teacher will consider the request and advise in writing within 5 days whether the absence will be authorised or not. If a holiday is authorised it is up to the parents to provide authentic proof of these exceptional circumstances. Please note, for authorised holidays, confirmation of booking will be requested to show that the holiday was not booked prior to the holiday request. Holidays booked prior to the request will be seen as a condoned parental absence and will not be authorised. All holiday requests are kept in the child's file until they leave the school.

***The expression "parent" in relation to a child or young person includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him/her or who has care of the child.**

Religious absence

The school will authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival, eg Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance. If parents do not request the religious absence in advance, in writing, then the absence will not be authorised.

Summary

At St Andrew's we want to work together with parents and carers to promote good attendance and punctuality. We will make attendance a whole school priority and listen carefully to the needs of parents and children. We also aim to provide support and information for parents/carers to access help to improve the attendance of their children. Finally, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on progress and learning ultimately helping children to reach their full potential.

The expected target attendance of our pupils is 97%.