



# Attendance Policy

## Last reviewed Summer 2017

**This policy should be read in conjunction  
with the following policies:**

**Assessment, Recording & Reporting, Extended School Day,  
Child Protection & Safeguarding, Home-School Agreement  
and Registration of Pupils**

**Reviewed by: Mrs C Skipper, Headteacher, Summer Term 2017**

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## **1. Introduction**

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for promoting good attendance at St Nicholas Primary School.

It was developed through a process of consultation with teaching staff and the Education Welfare Officer.

## **2. AIMS**

- To raise standards and achievement of pupils by ensuring regular attendance, therefore enabling continuity of education and progression.
- To raise awareness, in pupils and parents, of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance in raising achievement and preparing children for adult life.
- To account for all absences from school.
- To limit absences from school to those caused by genuine sickness, unavoidable medical appointments and parental holiday arrangements.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- To improve attendance to 96.5%
- To have a range of strategies to enable the school to detect signs of unauthorised attendance/truancy as early as possible and therefore to be able to react in the best interests of the children.
- To encourage a parental partnership to ensure good attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure parents are aware what constitutes an authorised absence, the importance of explaining absences and punctuality.
- To publicly reward good attendance and raise self esteem.

## **4. Overview – Attainment & Progress**

**Good attendance is one of the keys to success.**

Prompt arrival ensures that children are ready for the start of lesson and do not miss any work. Lack of punctuality not only disrupts the quality of teaching and learning for the class, but also lowers the self-esteem of the child who is late. By encouraging good habits and attitudes in the school, we will allow children to develop strategies which serve them well throughout their education and in the world of work.

Full attendance is encouraged with rewards and with regular reminders in class and in assemblies. The school encourages staff to discuss attendance with parents.

The Education Welfare Officer visits the school at least fortnightly. She works closely with Sarah Collins our attendance officer, tracking the unauthorised absences and poor attenders under 90%. This also enables her to pick up problems at an early stage. If teachers wish to speak to her in confidence, they may ask the Head/ Deputy to take their class. The Education Welfare Officer will only pick up cases of pre-statutory school age children if there is a major concern. The emphasis in this age group is clearly on the Foundation Teachers and the Head. In cases where pupils are persistently absent, or there is a pattern to absence, staff consult with the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or E.W.O. At present the E.W.O meets fortnightly

with the Deputy Head Teacher and admin staff to discuss urgent cases. For those pupils whose attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home and a meeting is arranged for the parent/carer, Deputy Head Teacher and E.W.O to discuss the problem. The meeting is to see if we can help in any way, explain the importance of regular attendance and explain the consequences if attendance does not improve. EWO also makes home visits.

### **Punctuality is encouraged at all times.**

The whistle blows at 8.50am. All pupils should be lined up and enter school by their own door. Doors are then closed and all pupils enter through their own door. The register is left open usually for 20 minutes, after this a child is deemed to be absent and an explanation for this absence is needed. In unusual circumstances the registers may be left open longer. This would need to be authorised by the Head Teacher. (See Registration Procedures)

When pupils are persistently late or there is a pattern to lateness, staff will telephone or send a late note to parents every half term. (These are available from the Head or Office). If this is not successful, the Deputy Head Teacher, Admin. Officer or E.W.O. should be consulted with a view to a home visit.

It is essential that all staff act as excellent role models for both attendance and punctuality. This includes collection of classes after playtime and lunch break.

## **5. Attendance and Punctuality**

### **a. Absences during term-time.**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The exceptional circumstances being:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking
- holidays outside term-time
- Acute crisis within the family, where the family needs to spend time together to support each other
- Court order/formal agreement where parents are separated
- Evidence will be asked in these circumstances.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **b. Fixed Penalty Notice.**

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

**AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS, RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS**

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- All absence by default are unauthorised. The governors will only authorise in exceptional circumstances, if the case is strong enough.

- It is up to the parents to provide a strong enough case and to provide enough evidence from employer or senior personnel.
- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application or leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the governors considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- Definition of exceptional circumstances – as in guidance with the local authority.
- This must mean avoiding Y2 SATS month and Y6 SATs week.
- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

## **6. Responsibilities of Attainment Support Assistants**

### **a. Registration**

- To ensure that children arriving late after the close of register report to the office
- to book their dinner and register a mark. (Very important in the case of evacuation procedures)
- To ensure that once a child is registered, they are present for the whole of the session, and if they have registered for a school dinner, they are present for the afternoon session

### **b. Dealing with absence – Administration/Office Staff**

On the first day of absence, school Office staff will ring parents/carers to find out the reason for absence. If a parent/carer cannot be reached, this will be recorded on SIMS. If a child returns to school with no given reason for absence, or without a note then a follow up letter is sent out to the parents/carers to ask for a note from them explaining the absence. The reason for absence is then recorded on SIMS when obtained. Parents/carers may also inform the school verbally or by telephone of the reasons for the child's absence. Discretion may be used in accepting reasons from Grandparents, etc., but reasons given by the pupil's siblings are not usually acceptable.

### **c. To alert the Head Teacher and/or Deputy Head Teacher, School Office Administration staff and the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.) with a view to a home visit:**

- in cases of suspected truancy.
- if you are not satisfied that the reason for absence is genuine or you think the absence should not be authorised.<sup>1</sup>
- in cases of persistent absence or lateness.
- if there is a pattern to absence or lateness
- Alert the parents, (as soon as possible) in cases of suspected truancy.
- To alert the Child Protection Co-ordinator if the reasons for absence (or lack of explanation) give you cause for concern for the well being of the child.
- To respond to parental requests for homework for children absent through illness (bearing in mind the problems of contagious illness).
- To liaise with parents to ensure that absence through illness does not disadvantage the child's academic progress

## **Note**

Only the Head Teacher can “authorise” absence, not parents. Absence is authorised if the child has not attended because of:

- genuine illness.
- a medical appointment
- other circumstances agreed between parent and Head Teacher.

If in doubt consult the Head Teacher

Notes are also available for teaching staff to send out, if they wish.  
(Appendix 2)

### **d. Dealing with post registration absence**

To alert the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher (Senior member of Staff, if Head Teacher and Deputy is absent) as soon as possible.

### **e. Dealing with lateness - Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

- To ask for a note from the parents/carers explaining the absence.
- To alert the Deputy Head Teacher and/or Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.)
- There may be a need for a home visit:
- if you are not satisfied that the reason for lateness is genuine
- in cases where pupils are late
- if there is a pattern to lateness
- To alert the parents, (as soon as possible) if you are not satisfied that the reason for lateness is genuine.
- To alert the Child Protection Co-ordinator if the reason (or lack of explanation) for the lateness gives you cause for concern for the well being of the child.
- To send a generic “late note” in the case of persistent lateness or patterns to lateness, every half term.

## **7. Responsibilities of the Deputy Head Teacher**

- When alerted to post registration absence, inform the parents/carers or emergency contacts as soon as possible. Alert the police or other agencies if this proves necessary ( e.g. very young children or if parents/carers cannot be contacted. Alert the police or other agencies if this
- To ensure the appropriate external agencies are contacted as soon as possible, when alerted to a possible child protection concern. (In conjunction with the Child Protection Co-ordinator).
- To ensure the parents are contacted as soon as possible, when alerted to a possible truancy.
- To monitor weekly class attendance (with help from Admin Staff).  
To authorise absence/delegate some responsibilities to Class teachers and Administration Staff (in clear cut cases of genuine absence)
- To liaise with the E.W.O. in relation to home visits.
- To liaise with the E.W.O. to meet with parents.
- To liaise with outside agencies (in conjunction with the child protection co-ordinator).
- To keep a watching brief on attendance and to be aware of and be ready to respond to any reasons for low rates of attendance.
- To report to the Governors on a termly basis on the school’s attendance statistics, in particular, the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To report to the L.E.A. (if required) and the D.F.E on statistics as detailed above.
- To provide a ‘Weekly Attendance Bear’, ‘Weekly Attendance Pound’ and stickers for best class attendance.

- To provide pupil attendance certificates, prizes, and rewards termly and annually, for excellent and very good attendance.

## **8. Responsibilities of other Senior Staff**

### **a. Deputy Head Teacher/Senior Leader for Behaviour**

- To oversee Attendance, Punctuality and Behaviour
- To deputise for the Head Teacher in her absence assuming any of the duties, outlined above.
- To alert all staff to the names of targeted children
- Set up a reward system for all pupils regarding attendance.
- Organise School Council to choose rewards
- To work closely with Mrs Collins/ Mrs Stephenson, Attendance Support Officer, to monitor individual, class and school attendance.
- Take Attendance assemblies.
- Make all children aware of their percentage attendance.
- Raise the profile of good attendance.
- If necessary to organise EWO and parents with the introduction of an attendance card scheme.

### **b. TLR / Phase Leaders**

- To deputise for the Head, if she and the Deputy are absent, assuming her duties (see above)
- To ensure all staff in their Key Stage (i.e. Newly qualified or supply teachers) are made familiar with, and follow, procedures and are alerted to possible problems
- To appoint and monitor efficiency of register monitors (Key Stage 2 Co-ordinator)

### **c. Child Protection Co-ordinator**

- To alert outside agencies when it is feared children may be in danger of harm. (in conjunction with the Head Teacher)

## **9. Responsibilities of the Administration Staff**

- All attendance registers to be kept updated on SIMS
- To prepare and update Weekly Attendance Registers (Appendix 4) for the attendance assemblies.
- To input pupil/class attendance data using O.M.R.
- To prepare and print Weekly Absence Registers (Appendix 5).
- To provide Monthly Official Attendance Registers (Appendix 6).
- To track absence (ensuring notes are returned and if not, send further notes).
- To record lateness after registers close to ensure efficient evacuation.
- To record reasons for pupils leaving school during the school day
- To compile annual and termly attendance statistics for Governors, L.A. and DfES
- To compile attendance statistics for the previous school year, before annual class promotion.
- To keep safe attendance registers during the school day and at night.
- To provide annual attendance figures for School Reports.
- To compile and keep up to date pupil information, including names and addresses

- of pupils, parents/carers and others with parental responsibility, as well as
- emergency contacts.
- To contact parents and the record telephone messages to pass on to Class teachers.
- To contact parents in the case of post registration truancy, if the Head is engaged.
- To meet with the Deputy Head.
- To meet with the EWO.

#### **10. Responsibilities of the Education Welfare Officer**

- To visit school fortnightly to make contact with children and liaise with the school.
- To liaise, fortnightly, with the School Attendance Officer about school attendance.
- To liaise half termly with the Deputy Head.
- To organise meetings, make home visits, investigate reasons for absence and lateness (in consultation with the Deputy Head Teacher and Sarah Collins to ensure there is no duplication).
- To liaise with school and parents in devising strategies to deal with reluctant attendees.
- To carry out an Early Bird Week once every half term.
- To implement prosecution for non-attendance (as a last resort)
- To track missing pupils (e.g. those who have left the area, but do not appear to have registered at another school – including pre-statutory school age children).

#### **11. Responsibilities of the Governors**

- To have an overview of school attendance statistics.
- To demand accountability when attendance is poor.
- To demand accountability when unauthorised attendance is high.
- To support the school in devising and implementing strategies which encourage good attendance and punctuality.

#### **12. Parental Partnership**

The school views parents/carers as partners in the education of their children. When attendance or punctuality becomes a problem, the parents are involved at the earliest opportunity. (Details of when parents are informed are outlined throughout the above text.) Where problems are identified, the school will work in partnership with the parents/carers, E.W.O. and outside agencies to devise strategies which encourage full attendance and punctuality. It is important that, in the initial stages, tact and diplomacy are used in order that we can work together. Parents are encouraged to ensure their children attend school, punctually, every day. They are asked to contact the school to explain absences and lateness and this is outlined to them during induction sessions for them and their children, and reinforced in the information letter for new pupils.



### 13. Rewards

<b>Attendance Bear</b>	Weekly	For the best weekly class attendance and individual stickers
<b>Attendance Pot</b>	Weekly	For each class who gets above 95% gets £5 to put on their attendance barometer. The class who wins the attendance bear receives £10. This is then put into a pot and the class that win the highest attendance over the term gets to spend their money on a reward.
<b>Certificate</b>	Termly	For 98% termly pupil attendance
<b>Certificate</b>	Annually	For most improved attendance
<b>Certificate and Prize</b>	Annually	For 100% annual pupil attendance

There is also a special certificate to give out to pupils who are improving their attendance.

Weekly class reward for 100% attenders in form of raffle.

**Teachers are also free to link the school's reward system to attendance in their class (see Behaviour Policy).**