

# All Saints' and St Richard's Church of England Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Implemented	April 2018
Reviewed	Annual
Review Date	April 2019

## **Our Attendance Policy**

This policy reflects the vision and aims of All Saints' and St Richard's C of E Primary School by:

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

### **Principles**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never wise to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

***Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.***

***Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:***

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The School will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to

improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

**It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school time.**

### **Non Attendance**

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness please telephone the office before 9.00am on the morning of the absence, you can leave a message on the answerphone if you ring before the office is open. **You must continue to inform us each morning in the same way if the absence continues.** Someone from the office will ring you should we not hear from you each day. Please let us know in writing if you know that your child is going to be absent from school and the reasons for this.

### **Appointments**

We would ask that, wherever possible, routine dental and medical appointments are made outside of school hours. If an appointment has to be made during the school day please ensure that you bring your child in before or after the appointment to minimise disruption to their learning. We are unable to authorise a whole day absence due to a routine appointment, so should a child not come into school due to, for example, a dental appointment at 11.00am, the morning would be recorded as authorised absence and the afternoon would be unauthorised. Please bring appointment cards or letters to the office to be photocopied as we need to keep a copy in your child's file.

### **Withdrawal from learning applications**

Forms to request an absence from learning are available from the office. We are **not able** to authorise time away from school unless there are exceptional circumstances and we require 14 days' notice of any absence. **Family holidays are not covered by 'exceptional circumstances'**, so if there really is no alternative time that you can go on holiday, then you will receive a fixed penalty notice (£60 per parent, per child which increases to £120 if not paid within 21 days).

We do our very best to be fair when considering each application and whilst we do have some discretion if the request is exceptional, with the attendance rate as it currently is, **East Sussex County Council have told all Headteachers to issue fines**

### **Lateness**

School begins at 8.45am and children should be in school by this time and ready to start the school day. If your child arrives after the children have come in to school please bring them to the office where they will be recorded in the Morning Signing in Book. If your child is signed in after 8.45am they will be recorded as arriving late. If your child arrives late after the registers close at 9.00am they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence for that session. Punctuality is important educationally so that children don't miss out on their learning time and is also a legal requirement. If you are having problems getting your child to school on time, please make an appointment to see the class teacher or the Head of School to discuss how school can support you.

### **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

#### **Terms 1 to 6 2016-2017 Attendance**

Total: 94.5%

Target: 96%

Authorised absence: 4.1%

Unauthorised absence: 0.8%

#### **The attendance target for 2017-2018 is 97%**

We are required to monitor attendance and investigate the reasons for anyone falling below the target of 97%. At the beginning of each term, a check will be made of the attendance figures for the previous term and certificates will be given out to pupils who have achieved 100%. Certificates will also be given to each class and the class with the best attendance result above our school target will be presented with the school attendance award. Every parent will also receive an email to let them know if their child was above or below the target for the term and will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher if below.

We know that illnesses can't be helped and there are public health policies around some symptoms that mean your child can't attend school. However, we have experienced children being off with what appear to be minor illnesses and would ask that you think carefully about whether your child really needs to miss school for certain complaints. Our office staff can administer medicines as long as we have your consent in writing (forms are available from the office) so please always come and talk to us if you have any concerns.

#### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Catherine Cottingham, Executive Headteacher  
Gavin Davison, Head of School  
Gwen McCowan, Secretary