

St Andrew's CEVC Primary School, Great Yeldham.

# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Rewritten Spring term, 2011  
By Maria Trappitt

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## INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Regular school attendance is essential and parents, pupils and teachers all have their part to play in ensuring this happens.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- *Authorised*: the school approves pupil absence
- *Unauthorised*: the school will *not* approve absence

The parents/carers and the school are responsible for children's attendance and **ONLY** the Headteacher can authorise absences.

## ST ANDREW'S ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

St Andrew's CEVC Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to

resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

## ST ANDREW'S PRINCIPLES FOR ATTENDANCE

- The head teacher must ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Class Teachers must complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 15 minutes of the start of the session. Registers must then be sent immediately to the school office. **Registers must not be left in the classrooms.**
- Parents/carers must be encouraged to contact school early on the first day of absence.
- Attendance is reported to parents in their child's end of year report, and in the online Summary Profile.
- Attendance rates are published in the school newsletter, recognising good and improved attendance of **all** pupils.
- **All** staff must promote positive attitudes towards pupils returning after absence.
- The head teacher must consult with **all** members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- The senior management team and board of governors will regularly evaluate attendance procedures.
- All staff will work towards ensuring that **all** pupils feel supported and valued. We must send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Class Teachers must have procedures which allow absentees, due to sickness, to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

We want to encourage very good attendance so that each year attendance is above 96% and there are no persistent absentees where a child has below 85% attendance.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.55 am each day although children are entitled to enter the playground from 8.40am to make a calm start to the day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

Morning registration ends at 9.05 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as Late. After 9.25 am this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.15 pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours enter the school through the main entrance enabling the school office to register that the child is on site.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

## **LATENESS PROCEDURES**

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the whistle is blown. Registers are marked by **9.05am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At **9.25am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that the parent/carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record the parent/carer will be asked to meet with the Head teacher to resolve the problem, but they can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to

school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

If any pupil arrives late the office staff will ask the parent to sign a late book that records the name, class, time and reason for lateness. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will complete the record asking the pupil to offer a reason. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations. A member of the office staff will then escort the child to their classroom.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ST ANDREW'S PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING GOOD ATTENDANCE</b></p>
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- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:
  - 1) ***contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unobtainable;***
  - 2) ***write a letter requesting information, or,***
  - 3) ***where possible the EWO will visit the pupils' home.***
  
- If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence; the school EWO will be consulted.
  
- If the absence continues the case will be further discussed with the EWO and further action planned. After a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited in to the school by the Head teacher. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance. If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral will be made to the EWO, and formal intervention planned. If the parent/carer are not contactable after 10 days of absence the child will be reported as a ***'child missing from education'*** to the EWO (See Appendix A, for reporting).
  
- If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the

school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible. In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff, by their behaviour, must make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government; Local Authority and the School. The Government has set a minimum attendance target of 95% of lessons, if two weeks holiday is taken in term time that takes your child to less than 95%.

The Governors of St Andrew's made the decision at a Full Governing Body Meeting in June 2011 that **no** holidays in term time would be authorised.

### **Process for requesting any absence**

- By law applications must be made by a parent normally residing with the child.
- Applications should be made in writing on the school's absence form (attached) at least one month before the absence is due to begin and sent to the school office.
- The head teacher will return a copy of the absence form to the parent with reference to absence to date.

Unauthorised absences remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the EWO, and could result in court action. If a pupil does not return to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll. The school has the right to do this under government legislation.

Parents/carers needing exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences should make an appointment to discuss this with the head teacher well in advance.

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR ABSENCE IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

### **Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances;**

- Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

## MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Head teacher.

## STATEMENTS OF EXPECTATIONS

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### **What is expected of the pupils?**

- ◆ To respect themselves and others
  - ◆ To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
  - ◆ To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
  - ◆ To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
  - ◆ To be happy and encourage others to feel happy
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- Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered.
  - Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.
  - Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996

Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

- If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social care where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **What is expected of the parents?**

- ◆ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- ◆ To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- ◆ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- ◆ To work closely with the school and EWO to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- ◆ To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused
- ◆ To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS or the numeracy and literacy hour
- ◆ To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

- The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount.
- The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **What is expected of the Office/Admin Staff?**

- ◆ To monitor registers on a daily basis
- ◆ Check absence notification (for telephone messages) and change any unauthorised absence codes if a message has been received in the office

- ◆ If no message has been received by 10:00am, office to ring child's contact numbers and find reason for absence
- ◆ Absence letter to be sent home if the office is unable to make any contact.
- ◆ To provide termly analysis of attendance for the EWO visit.

### **What is expected of the School?**

- ◆ To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- ◆ To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- ◆ To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- ◆ To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent/carer condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- ◆ To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 education act
- ◆ To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- ◆ To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- ◆ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- ◆ To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- ◆ To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum
  - The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children.
  - Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

<b>REWARD SYSTEMS</b>
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Children with 100% attendance will be recognised with a 'gift voucher' at an end of year assembly in July.

## **TARGET SETTING**

All state schools are required to set 'School Attendance Targets' in accordance with regulations which become effective from September 2007. Targets are set to achieve or maintain low levels of overall absence. This process will form part of the overall school target-setting exercise undertaken in conjunction with the school's School Improvement Partner (SIP) and should be an item on the agenda for the autumn term visit.

## **EVALUATING PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The LA request that all schools should set a target for attendance of 96% and above. We must strive to achieve this target and if the target is not met analyse why. Part of the evaluation process will be looking at what interventions have been successful.

- Has the attendance of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved?
- Has the school ethos improved?
- Has the behaviour of pupils improved?
- How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?
- Is St Andrew's a better place to be for staff and pupils?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the local community?
- How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education lessons, Class and School Councils, as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

## **MONITORING**

The head teacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The head teacher has a meeting with the EWO each term to discuss concerns and review absence data.

## **RECORDING ABSENCE FIGURES**

Each year, every school is required to submit to the DfE details of the level of absence within their school. Schools are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence. For more information see the National Absence Tables available on the DfE website.

## **DELETIONS FROM ROLL AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, No.1751, Statutory Instruments, Regulation 12, requires all schools to notify the LA of deletions from roll **as soon as** they become aware that they may be made (See Appendix 1).

If a school receives verbal notification that parents are withdrawing their children from school to home educate them, the school should not wait for the written confirmation before informing the LA via the EWO. When the EWO becomes aware that a family has elected home education they will complete a referral form and forward it to the Children Missing Education Senior Officer. The details will then be passed on to the Home Education Service. Schools can only delete the child from roll once they have received the letter from the parents and its notification has had time to reach the LA. Schools must neither wait until the LA acknowledges the notice of the deletion nor seek its approval of the deletion.

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