



St Andrew's CE VC Primary School

A church school that learns, grows and achieves together

“Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it”
Proverbs 22:6

Attendance Policy

Signed (Chair)	Name Anthony Parker	Date
Signed (Head)	Name Graham Pike	Date
Ratified by Governing Body on		Next Review

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This policy has been assessed with regard to its impact on equalities issues. The equality impact assessment has been conducted by the relevant Governors' sub-committee and focused on race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion/belief. Community Cohesion has also formed part of the impact assessment work in order to ensure respect for diversity, alongside a commitment to common and shared bonds.

EqIA outcomes

- The assessment found no areas of potential negative impact and actions resulting in positive impact are in place.

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Attendance Policy

Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and their friendships. Children should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable, permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those attending the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1966 Education Act, a student is required to attend regularly at school where he or she is a registered student or the parents/carers could be liable for prosecution.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the school consider authorising an absence. Previous attendance for the child will be taken into consideration when reaching a decision to authorise an absence. **The school will not authorise an absence for a child whose attendance is below 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

From September 2015, the Government regards any pupil with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee'.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not the parents) as either AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED.

Absence

Authorised absence

Absence can be authorised if the pupil is away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes, eg a day of religious observance, family bereavement, attending an approved off-site activity or special off-site tuition.

All absence starts unauthorised until a reason is given and accepted by the school.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which no permission has been given. For example, the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings; the pupil is shopping during school hours; the pupil is away from school due to an exceptional circumstance for a period longer than agreed with the school is on a family holiday without permission.

Holidays during term time

The school policy is that all holidays/long weekends should be taken during school holidays. Requests for a holiday will only be granted when 'exceptional circumstances' can be demonstrated.

Examples of exceptional circumstance are:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative being seriously ill.
- A significant trauma in the family recently.

To make an application to take a holiday during term time, parents/cares must submit an Absence Request Form to the Headteacher, before making any arrangements. Absence Request Forms are available from the school office. Each request will be treated on an individual basis. It should therefore be understood that not all holiday requests will be authorised by the Headteacher.

No absence will be authorised in Terms one or five (in line with LA guidelines due to the importance of settling into a new school year in Term one and National Assessments in Term five) 'unless in exceptional circumstances'.

If the holiday absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the school may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice fine. The fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full before the 28 days allowed, the Local Authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrate's Court under S444 of the Education Act of 1996 (failure to ensure regular attendance at school).

Other absences

Other absences from school during term time will be considered on an individual basis and a decision made on whether to authorise the absence. To make an application parents/carers must make an appointment to see the Headteacher, prior to the absence.

Lateness

- The school gates are open at 8.30am. Children need to be in class ready to start the school day by 8.45am at the latest. Registration is between 8.45am and 8.55am. Pupils are marked late between 8.55am and 9.05am (L code).
- Pupils who arrive after 9.05am are classed as Late, after registers are closed. (U code)
- Afternoon registration is between 1.20pm and 1.30pm.
- Action to address lateness will be taken. A letter will be sent to parents/carers of children who are late on a regular basis.

Illness

- Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of the absence to provide a reason for the absence, preferably before 8.30am, indicating the type of illness.
- Where the school is not made aware for the reason for a child's absence, they will contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence. If no contact is made and no explanation for absence is given, a letter of explanation will be required by the parent/carer on the child's return to school.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher will be informed.

Medical or dental appointments

- Parents and carers are encouraged to make all medical arrangements, where possible, out of school hours.
- Absence from school due to a medical appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to inform the class teacher/office in advance of the appointment. Parents are asked to provide a copy of the appointment letter/card. This information will be recorded on the child's electronic record.

Reporting to parents/carers

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parents/carers at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

Attendance which is causing concern

Parents/carers will be contacted by letter if any of the following criteria are met:

- Their child's attendance falls below 90% by the end of term 2.
- Their child has three or more broken weeks in a term.
- There is a regular pattern of absence.
- Their child is regularly late.

If a child is persistently absent (or late) and the school considers efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Any child whose attendance drops below 90% without good reason or who has more than five broken weeks for two or more terms each year, will be asked to attend an Attendance meeting with the Headteacher. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss support strategies, which can be implemented to improve the attendance of the individual pupil. An action plan will be written to record against to improve the child's attendance.

If following the meeting, attendance does not improve, the Headteacher with the support of the Education Welfare Officer may call the parents/carers to attend an Attendance Panel and the South Gloucestershire school attendance procedures may be implemented.

Promoting attendance and targets for the year

- Parents/carers will be regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance.
- Appendix A lists the people who have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- The school's attendance target is for every pupil to achieve at least 96%.
- The overall school target for 2023/2024 is 96%

Children Missing Education

If a family moves away from the area or wishes to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. As a safeguarding measure, a child cannot be removed from a school roll until the school has been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. When children stop attending and cannot be traced, the school will follow the Local Authority guidance and repost them to Local Authority Children Missing Education Officer.

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Roles and responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Headteacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the office staff or teacher as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practise.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To coordinate with the Education Welfare Office regarding providing work/education for children who are absent for sustained periods.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on Arbor.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take the register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents/carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

Business Manager

- To prepare, manage and coordinate the use of Arbor Attendance Manager
- To monitor and track attendance patterns, in conjunction with the Headteacher for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports where necessary.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish that a satisfactory reason for absence has been provided.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

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Good attendance: the consequences of missing a few days across the school year.

Attendance	Number of school days missed	
100%	Zero days off	Excellent! A child can take full advantage of the learning opportunities
98% +	Less than a week	Very good. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. A child should reach his/her full potential, leading to the best possible start to their formal education.
97% – 98%	5 days – a school week	
96% – 97%	6 days	Good attendance. A child has a good start to their schooling and make the most of all opportunities to do their best
95.2% - 96%	8 days	Satisfactory, just above the average. A child is likely to achieve their targets; however, they should strive to build on this.
93% - 95.2%	10 days – two school weeks	Below the national average. If a child has more than two weeks away from school they may fail to make the expected progress.
91% - 93%	15 days – three school weeks	Poor attendance. Absence is now affecting attainment and progress in school. Parents will need to work with the school to improve the situation.
Below 90%	20 days – four school weeks. Level of concern	Unacceptable A child will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Below 90% attendance is considered persistent absenteeism and the local authority may become involved to take action. Where this is due to a genuine medical reason, an Individual Health Care Plan will be considered.
Below 85%	Serious concern	Children with this level of attendance are missing a day for every week in school. Absence is causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is seriously affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Where absences are unauthorised, the school will be supported by the Local Authority to take action against the parents/carers.