



## St Andrew's CE VC Primary School Attendance policy

The school considers that regular school attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Statutory Framework**

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education whether by regular school attendance or otherwise.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent 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 absence be authorised.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible - by phone call or preferably in writing. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents should avoid, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours, or taking holidays during term time.

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.

### **Registration**

Registers will be called at 8.45 a.m. and at 1.30 p.m. and will be marked in red or black in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register front sheet.

Registers will close at 8.55 a.m. and at 1.35 p.m. If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she will be marked as late up until 9:15 am. Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed must report to the office.

Pupils who arrive after 9:15 am will be marked in as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is persistently late a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

## **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence**

It is vital that all staff apply the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Absence can be **authorised** if.

- ◆ the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- ◆ the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
- ◆ the pupil is the child of Traveller parents
- ◆ there is a family bereavement
- ◆ the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- ◆ the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- ◆ the pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling)
- ◆ Absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Pupils away from school for the following reasons can be regarded as present for statistical purposes. The register should be marked with the relevant letter:

- ◆ the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition;
- ◆ the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

Absence will be **unauthorised** if: -

- ◆ no explanation is forthcoming;
- ◆ the school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- ◆ the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings;
- ◆ the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- ◆ the pupil is on holiday in term time
- ◆ the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions (e.g. a birthday);
- ◆ the pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

## **Penalty notices**

The school can request South Gloucestershire Council to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised holidays in term time or when children arrive at school late after registration.

A Penalty Notice can be issued to one or both parents/carers, for each child, if there are more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 7 week period (i.e. 70 sessions of possible attendance at school). A session is a morning or an afternoon.

Any person with day to day care of the child may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice fine is currently £60 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

## **Special Occasions**

The school can grant absence in exceptional circumstances for particular occasions such as music and ballet exams. Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to the absence. Cases will be judged on their individual merits taking into account the following:

- 1) the nature of the event;
- 2) the frequency of requests;
- 3) the overall attendance pattern of the child.

## **Procedures For Following Up Absence**

- ◆ If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent without adequate explanation, the Headteacher will write to the parents.
- ◆ If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note or if the explanation offered by a note is unsatisfactory, the Headteacher will write to the parents.
- ◆ A letter will be sent to the child's parents when attendance over any two month period falls below 90% to invite them in to attend a meeting to discuss reasons for poor attendance and to create an action plan to improve the child's attendance.
- ◆ If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- ◆ Notes from parents explaining the child's absence are to be kept. All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded on the appropriate message pad and then put on to SIMS.

## **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- ◆ Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance.

## **Attendance Registers**

Registers are key documents, both in managing pupil attendance and as a source of evidence for possible court proceedings. Registers are legal documents and must be kept for three years after the date on which they were last used. Care must be taken to record information accurately.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that 2 registers are kept one for attendance and one for admissions. Each class has an attendance register, which is called, at the start of every morning and afternoon session. It must show whether each pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at the school is present or absent and must show differences between authorised and unauthorised absence.

The Governing Body must make both registers available for inspection. It must allow School Inspectors; anyone authorised by the Secretary of State and Officers of the LA to take extracts. The Governing Body must also give the LA the name and address of every pupil who does not attend regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of two weeks (pupil Registration Regulations 1956).

Pupil reports sent to parents have to include information of the pupil's attendance record, showing the number of unauthorised absences.

## **General**

The maintenance of regular attendance requires constant effort and attention on the part of parents, teachers, Headteachers, governing bodies, the Education Welfare Service and other support services.

The LA, parents and schools should work closely together in the best interests of the child.

This policy is written in conjunction with the LA policy

Signed .....  
Chair of Governors

Dated .....  
October 2015

## **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.*

## Symbols

### **Pupils Present When the Register is called**

An oblique stroke in black ink is to be used to record a pupil's presence with the reverse direction for the afternoon session. As the register is an official record, tipex must not be used.

### **Other Annotation**

It is easier to add up attendance figures if the symbols for authorised absences are immediately distinguishable. Authorised and unauthorised absences are to be shown in the register by "O" with a supplementary symbol (letter) inside the letter to record the reason for absence.

### **Authorised Absence (Zero with appropriate code within it)**

- B Pupil educated off site
- C Other circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances, other approved absences not covered by other codes).
- D Dual registration
- E Excluded.
- H Family holiday (for which leave has been granted).
- I Illness
- J Attending Interview, e.g. with prospective employer or with another educational establishment.
- M Medical and dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided
- R Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong.
- S Approved study leave.
- T Traveller child travelling for family work purposes.

### **Approved Educational Activity Code Letter Only, No Zero**

- P Approved sporting activity (participation in/attendance at).
- V Educational visit or trip (UK/overseas).
- W Approved work experience.
- Y Enforced closure

### **Unauthorised Absence**

- G Family holiday not agreed
- O Main marking for unauthorised absence.
- U Arrives at school after 9.15 a.m. – unauthorised absence.

### **Other Codes**

- L Late (after 8.55 am and before 9:15 am) – pupil marked present.