



# **Attendance Policy**

## **St Pauls Community Primary and Nursery School**

### **2020-2021**

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# Whole School Attendance Policy

The responsibility for promoting attendance at St Paul's CP School & Nursery is shared by everyone involved in the school, pupils, parents, staff and Governors.

## Aims

Our attendance policy touches all aspects of our school life and relates to our school Mission Statement.

- Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parents, our local community, the Community Inclusive Trust and the Local Authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

Collection and analysis of data about attendance enables the school to work towards targets set by the Department for Children's Schools and families (DCFS) and Local Authority.

## 1. Expectations:

### 1.1 We expect the following from all our pupils:

- Pupils attend school regularly and achieve 96%+ attendance over the academic year, to support future success.
- Pupils arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the school day.
- Pupils will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### • 1.2 We expect the following from parents:

- To not take holiday in the school year/ during term time.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9.30am, or as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend for **everyday** they are absent, unless agreed otherwise during the initial call.
- Ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework and have their bookbag (including their reading book and reading Record) and P.E kits etc.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Contact the child's teacher or the Inclusion Team, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school or their attendance.

### **1.3 Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- A text message could be sent if the school has not received a reason for an absence by 9:30am.
- Early telephone contact from the Inclusion Team when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason. Home visits will be made if telephone contact is not successful.
- The school will comply with legal requirements for supporting and addressing attendance concerns, setting targets to be achieved.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Attendance and punctuality will be monitored on a weekly basis, discussed with the Inclusion team if attendance concerns are arising.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Support for any student's mental health and emotional well-being.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A high quality of education that engages pupils and meets their differing needs.
- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Developing of partnerships with parents to promote good attendance, raise concerns and follow the government guidance to support good attendance.

### **1.4. Reasons why good attendance is important**

- Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school.
- Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop their social skills, sharing ideas and working with their friends (linking to personal development of pupils).
- Non-attendees will miss out on essential learning and other social events (linking to personal development of pupils).
- The school has a proactive and positive ethos that places a high value on attendance and punctuality.

## **2. Managing Absence:**

- 2.1 Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:
- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session (9am and 1pm) and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks in the morning daily, by the Inclusion Team, and at other appropriate times, such as the end of term analysis.
- First day calling for unexplained absence and Home Visits for any absence causing concern.
- Recording of good attendance on individual End of Academic Year Reports.
- A certificate for 100% attendance at the end of Term 2, 4 and 6 (for any term) and for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence OR 100% minus any time missed due to agreed medical appointments).
- An 'improved attendance' letter for any pupil showing improved attendance following Inclusion Team intervention. An Attendance Concern letter will be raised if attendance falls below 90% OR is on a consistent decline.
- Classes who achieve 100% Attendance in a given week receive a special certificate given by the headteacher in the classroom.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems, including the sharing of relevant information with a destination school or other agencies.
- The Inclusion Team will arrange meetings with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school and work to resolve the issues.
- The Inclusion Team and the Headteacher will arrange School Attendance Panels for those children's whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Integris system is used to provide valuable, year group, class and pupil level attendance data, which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the Inclusion Team.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies

### 3. Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by a home visit from the Inclusion Team.
- Absences messages will be put in the registers and retained in the Inclusion office.
- Where there is no response or contact made, a home visit from the Inclusion Team may be arranged.
- Where non-attendance continues, the Inclusion Team will discuss with the Head Teacher and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the EWS or Fixed Penalty Warnings or Notices (fines).
- If a pupil is missing for 5 days and we do not know where they are, we will report them to the Local Authority 'Missing from Education'.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Education Welfare Officer, with a view to a formal referral being made to the Education Welfare Service, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made, then the case will be reviewed and further action planned, which could lead to prosecution under the Lincolnshire County Council's Prosecution Policy.

### 4. Persistent Absence

In England, good attendance at school is 96.3%+ for the academic year. Lincolnshire County Council class **persistent absence** as 15% of a half term and then also of the academic year (28 days/ 56 sessions), including both authorised and unauthorised absences combined. If a child's absence is a cause for concern and falls close to or below 90% in any half term, a meeting will initially be requested with the parent and then a School Attendance Panel will be called to ensure that the school and the family are actively working together to address the issue. An action plan will be drawn up and agreed by both parties and a timescale for improvement will be set. If attendance does not improve and attendance falls to 85%, further warning notices will be issued and further action will be taken, possibly resulting in court action being taken.

## 5. Medical Issues

Pupils with on-going long-term medical issues will also have their attendance monitored, but their absence for medical appointments will be considered. The school may request the support from the Children and Young Person's Nursing Team.

The school will require evidence from a child's doctor or medical specialist, along with copies of appointment letters etc. The school may request permission to contact these professionals for more information about a child's health and medical needs, in order that absence can be minimalized. If there is a hospital appointment booked for a morning or afternoon we will expect you to attend school for the other sessions, *having a hospital appointment does not enable you to automatically have a whole day off school.*

If the school or the Nursing Team request that referrals are made to specialists, a timescale of actions will need to be agreed. Authorised absence for medical matters are normally granted for pupil illnesses.

Medical appointments are to see: specialists, paediatricians, therapists (e.g Physiotherapists/Speech and Language) & hospital professionals.

*Please note that this DOES NOT include optician and dental appointments under routine procedures and check-ups - these must be made out of normal school hours.*

## 6. Absence during term time/ holiday requests

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that

**Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'**

'Exceptional' in this context is being of unique and significant emotional or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

**If Parents wish to make a holiday request then they must write a letter to the Headteacher, at least one month prior to the date of departure. A meeting will then be arranged, which you will need to attend.** You will be informed of the final decision both verbally and in writing.

Only in exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Headteacher, will the absence be authorised. If the decision by the parents is to still intend to take their child/ren on holiday, a **Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter/ notice** will be issued.

If a pupil is removed from school for an unauthorised holiday for more than 4.5 days, the School and the Local Authority will issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine. Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution on the grounds that the parent is failing to secure their child's school attendance.

## **7. Reintegration**

The Inclusion team will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees and the programme of support, if this is required.

## **8. School organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition, specific responsibilities are allocated to individual staff as follows:

### **8.1 Head Teacher:**

- Interview all parents who request leave of absence, unless specifically delegated to the Inclusion Team.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- Set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.

### **8.2 Class Teacher:**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- Attendance is recorded am and pm on Integris, this is then checked by a member of the Inclusion Team. A present or absent mark should be filled in for every child on their register and not leave any blank spaces.
- To complete any **known reason** for an absence.
- If unsure which code to use, refer to Inclusion team.
- To refer any unexplained absence to the Inclusion Team to follow up.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To notify the Inclusion Team if a child does not return from lunch.



### **8.3 Inclusion Team:**

- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO or the Attendance Team at the Local Authority.
- To analyse absence 6 times a year and liaise with the Headteacher over actions to be taken, this will be completed termly to prevent the impact of poor attendance over another term.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To make sure all reasons for absence are recorded correctly in the register.
- If an absence note is not brought in on child's return, the Inclusion Team will call parents to confirm.
- To work with families and young people to improve individual's attendance.

### **8.4 Governors:**

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parent's evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

## **9. Education Welfare Service:**

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the “attendance enforcement arm” of most local authorities which complements the role of the school. Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves.

- In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures they can support schools in a variety of ways:
- Liaise with identified school staff.
- Where a referral is accepted, undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Where necessary, instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA, including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance.
- Support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- Support schools in the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for persistent absence and holiday's within term time.

## 10. Office Staff:

- School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.
- Telephone absence slips to be given to the Inclusion Team.
- Maintain a "Late Book" and a "Going Home" book if a child needs to leave school before end of school day.

## 11. Liaising with External Agencies

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

- Other Agencies that can be used where appropriate in individual cases are:
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services (BOSS).
- Educational Psychologists/ CAMHS-Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Service.
- Social Care or the Early Help Team.
- Local Police or PSCO's.

## 12. Coronavirus support

- All attendances regarding coronavirus will continue to be recorded in the way that they have been through the pandemic.
- If your child is **shielding** and has a **letter from the government** this would need to be provided for school to evidence absences.
- All children are expected to return to school in September 2020.
- The usual protocol will be in place for absences from September, if you have any concerns regarding your child attending school or their needs please speak to Miss Palmer or Mrs Almey to raise your concerns via telephone.
- Attendance for every pupil will be monitored and attendance meetings held where needed.
- Students will be supported for any anxieties and worries related to the pandemic.

## **Strategies for persistent absentees**

Escalation of Intervention If a pupil's attendance falls below **95% (GREEN STAGE)**

- The senior member of staff responsible for attendance will consider the reasons for lateness. Periods of proven/non-contested illness will be discounted within the percentage and then the following will happen:
- The senior member of staff responsible for attendance will call the Parents/Carers to discuss the issue and explain that the attendance level will be monitored for 4 weeks.

Escalation of Intervention If a pupil's attendance falls below **90% (AMBER STAGE)**

- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the senior member of staff responsible for attendance. (Attendance awareness 2).
- Should the school deem it necessary then the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored over a two-week period and then for a further 4-week period to ensure that it is maintained.
- An attendance action plan will be agreed with both the parent and pupil.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **85% (RED STAGE)**

- Parents will be invited in to school to ensure that they understand the significance of such poor attendance.
- An action plan will be set up.
- A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and the possibility of a Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Outside agencies may be involved – EWO, Social Services, Homestart etc.
- Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided.

**Reviewed on: July 2020**

**Renewal date: October 2021**



