



St John's Primary School Attendance Policy 2016-17

Introduction

St. Johns attaches great importance to children attending school regularly and punctually. To this end we will do all we can do to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children arrive at their school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school.
- Contact the school on each day of the child's absence.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school promptly of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The school will:

- Encourage good attendance through a system of reward and recognition.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils.
- Monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when a pupil has failed to attend, where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.

- Make initial enquires to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, to express their concern and to clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - "The Rights Of The Child", by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out by their parent or carer on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

Registration and Punctuality

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is very important therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

- School opens at **8.45am** and registration takes place at **8.55am** and pupils who arrive after **8.55am** will be recorded as late to school.
- If a child/parent arrives at school after 8.55am the student must be signed in to ensure their presence on site is noted, particularly in the case of a fire drill.
- Morning registration will close at **9.25am**. If a student arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- The school day ends at 3.05pm.

Encouraging Attendance

St. John's School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing regular attendance statistics
- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- Accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration
- Class awards for best attendance and most improved attendance.
- Individual awards for 100% attendance each term.

The Head of School will monitor pupils, inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arrange meetings with them and refer the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- a) On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10.30am the school will endeavour to contact them promptly by telephone.
- b) If there is no response, the school will continue to try and contact the parent/carer.
- c) If the absence persists, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school role until the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The name and address of the new school; the new home address, if it known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Holidays/Leave of absence

- The school holiday dates, external exam (SATS) dates and INSET days are published a year in advance.
- In line with other local schools, the local Education Authority and Department for Education, we no longer authorise term time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Where there are exceptional circumstances, a Leave of Absence application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, ***no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date.***
- If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Penalty Notices for Holidays:

- In line with the guidance from the DfE, holidays during exam periods (this includes KS2 SATS) will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- The Head Teacher can now request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school and Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Penalty Notices [NEW PENALTY NOTICE INFO]

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. The pupil's overall attendance will be taken into account when deciding if a penalty notice will be issued.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school

or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.