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# Attendance Policy

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St Dunstan's RC Primary  
School

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Reviewed April 2016

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We believe that good attendance is vital for all our pupils. A child who attends school regularly will achieve better scores, adjust to a happy school life, and will be in a safe environment. We want our children to be happy, safe, high achievers so that they can have the best opportunities in their future lives.

## **Aims**

- To ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and punctually
- To develop the attitude throughout the whole school community that regular attendance at school is valued
- To provide an effective but manageable means of monitoring attendance for groups and individuals
- To provide effective and prompt support for parents and families where difficulties are affecting attendance.

## **Organisation**

### **Daily Administration**

Class teachers will complete registers with care on the SIMS and close them by 9.10am or 1.30pm respectively. If the system is unavailable, then a paper register will be completed and returned as soon as possible to the office.

Children enter the classrooms and a register is taken from 9.00am. Arrivals after this time must go through the office and collect a late slip; a late mark will be given on the register. Arrivals after 9.30 are marked as unauthorised late.

### **Absences**

We ask that parents/cares inform the school office by telephone of the reason for absence. If we have not been notified by 9.30am, a member of staff will contact the parent to find out why a pupil is absent from school. If we cannot confirm the child's whereabouts and we are concerned, then the police will need to be informed.

The office must be aware the reason of absence for each day, either by a daily phone call or by a parent stating when they expect a child to return.

Upon their return, the child needs to present a note confirming the reason for absence.

If school remains informed of a reason for absence, the office will send out an absence note to a parent for completion. After two weeks, unexplained absences will be followed up with a letter to parents requesting an explanation.

If a child remains absent from school for more than three weeks without explanation, they will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'child missing in education'.

### **Authorising Absence**

Absences can be authorised BY THE HEADTEACHER in certain circumstances e.g sickness, hospital appointments, exceptional family circumstance such as bereavement.

Holidays in term time are not authorised. See appendix A for the current guidelines on this. Holidays for religious observance may be authorised. See the appendix A for details.

Unauthorised absences (including those caused by lateness) could lead to the issuing of a penalty notice or to prosecutions.

The school acknowledges that children will become ill, but is also very aware of the need to support parents in the welfare of the children. Should a child experience high levels of illness, then medical intervention is essential. Therefore, for sickness absences over the equivalent of 10 days of the school year, evidence of medical intervention is required for the absence to be authorised.

When a child has more than 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence, the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (£60 if paid with 28 days)

### **Monitoring**

- Every child's unauthorised absences will be noted and recorded on her/his annual report. It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to the Dept for Children Schools and Families (DCSF).
- Individual records of all lates and absences for every child are entered by the office staff onto the SIMS attendance module.
- A child's attendance record is available on the School Pupil Tracker Online with their academic progress.
- Each week, overall attendance percentages will be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Each half term, attendance is scrutinised. If attendance percentage falls below 90%, then contact will be made and a parent invited in for a chat to explore necessary support.
- Governors will receive a report on attendance each term and an up-date on persistent absentee rate as well.

## Intervention

Upon identifying children causing concern, the senior leader or Parent Support Adviser will make an appointment to meet with the parent/care. This meeting is aimed at highlighting concerns, informing parents, and referring for appropriate support when necessary.

At that meeting we will:

- Share the registration data.
- Share the school leaflet 'Attendance Matters', especially detailing the consequences.
- Listen to the parent/carer's circumstances and concerns
- Suggest actions which may support improvement e.g.
  - ❖ Referral to school nurse
  - ❖ Referral to Parent Support Adviser
  - ❖ CAF/Social Care referral
  - ❖ Special rewards for the child
- Set a review date, not more than a half term later

Both meetings will be recorded on a standard form (see appendix)

If not significant improvement is evident or if the parent failed to attend the meeting, then the family will be referred to the Head Teacher for a pre-panel interview.

## Action

- An appointment will be sent (only once) to meet with the Head. At this meeting, the Head will clarify that all processes have happened and ensure that the parent/carer is clear about their legal responsibilities. Any pertinent circumstances will be considered and support offered as explained previously. From that point, a target attendance will be defined.
- If the pupil fails to meet this target in a designated time period, then the parent will be invited to an ATTENDANCE PANEL which will include and other agencies involved e.g. school nurse or attendance officer.
- At this panel, a parenting contract will be drawn up and actions agreed for both school and parents.
- An pupil with attendance below 90% will be classed as a PERSISTENT ABSENTEE (PA) and must also be reported to the Local Authority.
- If there is no improvement in attendance, a letter will be issued to the parent, warning of a fixed penalty. This is a FORMAL WARNING giving notice that there MUST be an improvement with the next 15-30 days. If attendance percentage remains low, the warning letter will continue to be renewed.
- If there is still no improvement after this time, the Local Authority will be instructed to issue a penalty notice.

In the interests of the children, if a parent does not engage with the school to improve the educational opportunities of the child, the school will take further action to initiate prosecution.

## APPENDIX A

### **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

The school acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognizes that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance,. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice o the school if they intend their child to be absent. In the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorized as unauthorised.

### **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME.**

The Governing Body of St Dunstan's recognize the vital importance of good attendance and its impact on the outcomes for children.

For this reason, holidays in term time will only be authorised in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANES. These circumstances do not include financial savings on holidays, or the general attendance pattern of any individual child.

Parents are required to explain why the holiday must be taken at that time and NO BOOKING should be made until authorisation is sought.

If holidays must be taken at a certain time because of restrictions on parental leave form work, then for autorisation, a letter must be provided from the employer confirming these restrictions.

When a holiday is being take substantially in school holiday, but travelling days (no more than2) are required, this may authrosided. An application is still required to be made.

If leave is no authorized, a warning will then be issued. If the child is subsequently absent, for more than 10 sessions, then a Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority for £120 per parent (£60 if pad within 28 days).