



Attendance Policy

St Dunstan's RC
Primary School

Approved February 2019
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Mission Statement

At St. Dunstan's RC Primary School

We Journey With Jesus Beside Us

And this means-

We have the encouragement and strength we need to achieve our goals and make good choices

We make everyone feel appreciated and treat each other with kindness and respect

We love God and others and know God's love for us is everlasting

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child

Statement of intent

St Dunstan's RC Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

• Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
• Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
• Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
• Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
• Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of St Dunstan's RC Primary School.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.

- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
 - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
 - An **“authorised absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
 - An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
 - **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:

- Missing **10 percent** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 6.2. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office.
- 6.3. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.4. If contact cannot be made by 10am, a home visit will be carried out.
- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer.
- 6.6. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.
- 6.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Contact information

- 7.1. Parents are responsible for:
 - Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
 - Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
 - Updating the school if their details change.

8. Attendance register

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

9. Attendance officer

9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

- 9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

10. Lateness

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at 9:00. Pupils should be in the school playground at this time. Any children who arrives after 9.00 must enter school through the school office and will be marked as late.
- 10.3. Registers are marked by 9:15.
- 10.4. The register closes at 10.00. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 10.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 13:30.

11. Term-time leave

- 11.1. At St Dunstan's RC Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 11.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 11.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 11.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 11.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 11.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 11.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

12. Religious observances

- 12.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 12.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

13. Appointments

- 13.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 13.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

14. Young carers

- 14.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 14.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 14.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

15. Rewarding good attendance

The school acknowledges 100 percent attendance in the following ways:

- Certificates and medals
- Activity afternoons

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Half termly class prizes
- Whole school attendance competition prizes

16. Monitoring and review

- 16.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 16.2. St Dunstan's RC Primary School's attendance target is 97 percent.

- 16.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
- 16.4. This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is February 2022.
- 16.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

