



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of St John's Meads CE Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

### Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter *and may make things worse*.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- ❖ **truancy before or during the school day**
- ❖ **absences which have never been properly explained**
- ❖ **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**
- ❖ **It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc.**
- ❖ **Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority (ESBAS). The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:



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**Absence:** Parents should call the school on the morning of the absence to give a reason. This can be via a message on the answerphone. The school will telephone the parent/carer of all children who are absent to ascertain the reason, if this is not already known. Registers close at 9am and children arriving after this time will be marked as late.

**Late:** If your child is late, you will need to accompany them to the school office to sign them in and give a reason for their absence.

### Reporting an absence to school

- Registration period: 8.40am – 9.00am (afternoon – 1pm).
- Parents are expected to contact school by 9.00am to report an absence.
- Staff will contact parents/carers between 9.00am and 9.30am to follow-up unreported absentees
- A late mark (L) will be given to all children who arrive after 9.00am (*Late arrival before the register has closed*)
- A daily phone call from parents/carers is required to update on the absence

### The school requests a reason for absence as follows: -

- 5 days- confirmation of medical reason (i.e. letter from family doctor, evidence of medical appointments, prescription, medication)

### Withdrawal from Learning Application

There is no entitlement for parents/carers to remove their child from school for the purposes of a planned leave of absence during term-time. Planned leave of absence during term-time will not be authorised except where the Headteacher considers it to be in exceptional circumstances in the best interest of the pupil's health or welfare to grant time away from school. All requests for planned leave of absence exceeding one session during term-time must be made on the school's official Withdrawal from Learning Application and must include details of the circumstances.

If any child's attendance levels fall below 90%, the Headteacher may request a meeting with the child's parent(s) to discuss ways to improve attendance.

In the case of an unauthorised absence the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice may be issued (in all cases, a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) of absence must have been accrued before a Penalty Notice is issued. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued to *each* parent for *each* child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result further legal intervention



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### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence (PA) is absence which is reported to ESBAS of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

### **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The whole school attendance target is 97%.

A termly attendance newsletter will be sent home to all families to report on class attendance and children who have achieved 100% attendance. Information is provided in this newsletter to advise parents and carers on how to we might be able to support families with persistent absence, poor attendance and children who are often late for school.

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Katherin Weeks, Headteacher

Lisa Newton-Brown, Office Manager/Attendance Officer

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy Adopted: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 by the Full Governing Board Date: 29/11/2018

Policy Review: Annually Date : November 2019

Signed: Katherin Weeks

Headteacher

Signed: Linda Caroe

Chair of Governors