



# Attendance Policy

**Signed by .....** **Position.....**

**Date of policy: February 2019**

**Next review: February 2021**

## **Introduction**

St John's School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for each pupil. We believe that if pupils attend school regularly they are in the best position to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

## **Statement of Intent**

At St John's School we believe that good attendance and punctuality are key to achieving progress. We understand that for some of our pupils there are on-going medical factors linked to their learning needs which may impact on their attendance and punctuality and therefore there are occasions when we need to be flexible in our expectations. Nevertheless we will strive to work with parents, carers, pupils, Local Authorities and other relevant agencies to achieve our attendance targets to ensure that we maximise outcomes for our pupils.

In addition, ensuring regular attendance and having effective registration procedures enables the school to monitor pupil welfare, for example with regards to safeguarding and health and safety.

## **School Attendance and the Law**

According to *The Education Act 1996*:

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

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." (See appendix 1)

If the parent/carer of the child fails to ensure that a child attends regularly, they will be contacted by the school and/or the local authority. Local authorities have a duty to step in if they believe a child is not getting the education required by law.

If a child is missing school, a parent/carer may be visited by a member of the Education Welfare Service who will discuss the child's attendance problems. *The Education (Pupils Registration) (England) Regulations 2006* (see appendix 2) state:

"Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time when the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorized."

If a reason for absence is provided in advance or subsequently by the parent/carer, the school then decides, according to the above regulations, if the leave is authorized or unauthorized.

Time off for a family holiday or for weddings etc. is not a legal right. However, according to *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*, the absence can be authorised if the Head Teacher 'considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application'. If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

There are a number of legal powers the school and local authorities can use if a child fails to attend school without authorisation. These include a School Attendance Order (SAO), Education Supervision Order (ESO), Penalty Notice, Parenting Order or court proceedings. (See appendix 3 for more details.)

## **Procedures**

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the School**

- St John's School operates a computer-based management system.
- There are two registration periods each day: the morning registration period opens at 9:05 AM and closes at 9:15 AM; the afternoon registration period starts at 1.30PM and closes at 1.35 PM.
- The codes to be used in the case of absence are to be found by right-clicking next to the 'tick' on the register page of SIMS. (See also Appendix 4.) If a pupil arrives after the registration period, without an authorised reason, this is to be recorded as unauthorised (note: not late).
- More detailed reasons for known absences (e.g. nature of illness) should be recorded on the same page in the register.
- At the close of each registration period, the registers are saved on SIMS.

- The school will attempt to contact the parent/carer on the first day of an unexplained absence. This will be carried out by the school office. The person making the call should record the reason in the register.
- When a message is received by the school office regarding an absence, the class teacher should be notified and the register amended on SIMS, including the reason in the 'display comments' box (right click).
- Letters, notes or emails regarding absences will be kept by the school office.
- The school will also attempt to make contact with the parent/carer if a pupil fails to return to school after a planned absence.
- Requests for holidays within term times must be made via a formal application from the parent/carer to the Head of School. (See appendix 5)
- Internal truancy is not an issue at St John's School due to the high levels of support and supervision given to all pupils.
- Where school procedures have failed to establish reasons for absence or in case of concern, the school shall contact the school attendance referral service of the pupil's local authority.
- After a period of absence it may be deemed necessary for a pupil to have a phased return or reduced timetable (e.g. after surgery, behaviour issues, bereavement etc.). The school will work closely with other agencies and professionals to ensure that the pupil is able to make a successful and happy return to full-time education as quickly as possible.
- The school will actively address issues that may lead to non-attendance (e.g. bullying).

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time.
- On the first day of absence, the parent should contact the school by telephone, email, fax or letter to inform the school of the nature of the absence and the likely return date. Where possible, this should be before the morning registration period, which begins at 9:05 AM.
- Messages via third parties (e.g. bus escorts) are not sufficient. However, a signed letter passed to them to be handed to the school is acceptable.

- If they have not already done so, (i.e. if the school was previously notified by telephone or email), on the day the child returns to school, the parent/carer must send in a note giving the reason for the absence. This provides the school with written evidence.
- Applications for leave of absence (e.g. for a holiday) MUST be made to the Head of School. They will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- It is essential that the school has up-to-date contact details for parents / carers.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils**

- To come to school when you are well enough
- To be on time for every lesson and for the register
- To let us know if you are not feeling well or if something is bothering you
- To let us know if someone is unkind to you or is bullying you
- To bring your home-school book every day and/or to pass letters to your teacher and take letters home

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the local authority.**

Each local authority has an important part to play in supporting and ensuring good attendance at school. Whilst some regulations are statutory, other procedures will be individual to each authority. (Contact details of a child's local authority can be obtained from the school.)

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At St John's, we believe that attainment is strongly linked to attendance. With the Governing Body, the school monitors attendance carefully and takes appropriate action if there are concerns, whilst from time-to-time recognising very good or improved attendance through praise of certificates. Attendance data is shared with other interested parties on the Annual Review document.

# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1**

A copy of *The Education Act 1996* is available at:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents)

## **Appendix 2**

A copy of *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006* is available at:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made)

## **Appendix 3**

### **School attendance and absence: the law**

See:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG\\_066966](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_066966) )

## **Appendix 4**

Codes for the register. See details in: DfE document: *School Attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. (Sept 2018)*

## **Appendix 5**



## St John's School - Request for Absence during School Time

Requests for absence during term time will only be granted in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances and at the discretion of the head teacher. When considering your request, the school looks at a number of factors including your child's recent attendance figures and whether you have already made a request for absence in the current academic year. Absence will not usually be authorised if your child is due to take an examination.

If your child is not granted exceptional leave of absence, then the absence becomes unauthorised. Pupils are only required to attend school on 190 days in a school year. That leaves 175 days for holidays and other activities!

PARENT / GUARDIAN TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION			
Name of pupil		Class	
1 <sup>st</sup> date of requested absence		Return date to school	No. of school days
Reason			
Is this the first request for absence this school year? YES /NO			
Signed		Date	
SCHOOL OFFICE TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION			
Previous Year's Attendance	%	Green = More than 95%	
Colour Code: Green / Amber / Red		Amber = 85% to 95%	
		Red = Less than 85 %	
HEAD TEACHER TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION			
Your request is <b>approved</b> and the absence as set out is duly <b>authorised</b> .	The code placed in the register will be	Annual Family Holiday	H
		Religious Observance	R
		Other Authorised Circumstances	C
		Education Off Site	B
		Performance	K
		Approved Sporting Event	P
Your request is <b>not approved</b> . If the pupil is absent as proposed above, it will be recorded as <b>unauthorised</b> .			
Reason			
Signed		Date	