

## St John's School Attendance Policy

### **Principles**

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result achieve their full potential. We recognise the link between attendance and good learning and endeavour to work in partnership with all parents and carers to uphold and reinforce this message to impact on the outcomes for our pupils. As a school we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Our policy is founded on our core values Excellence, Learning and Leadership

### **Safeguarding**

St John's School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, staff at the school plays a crucial role in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to SSAFA, and Senior Educational Social Worker, Pupil and Family Services.

### **Legal Requirements**

The law (The Education Act 1996 & Pupil registration regulations 2013) requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

### **Schools should follow up on absences to:**

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on the school's electronic register.

### **The Government expects:**

- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
  - Act early to address patterns of absence.



**Our Home-school agreement informs parents/carers that we expect them to:**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

**As a school we will:**

- Provide a welcome atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality; monitor individual Child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Inform parents of their child's attendance and punctuality as part of the school reporting system and when an absence request is submitted;
- Ensure that this policy and the schools' procedures for absence requests are published and accessible on our school website.

**Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

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

Parents should refer to the school prospectus which they will be given on admission, and is also available on the website, for full details regarding school timings.

All pupils should arrive at school promptly for the start registration period, which begins at 08.00. The register will be open between 08.00 and 08.15 for our morning session. If a child arrives after this time but before 08.45 they will be marked late in the register.

If a child arrives at school after the close of registration they should report to the school office and sign in to the late book stating the reason for the lateness and the time. If a child is more than half an hour later than the opening time for registration then they will receive a **U** code in the register. A **U** code equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will count towards their annual attendance which will be reported on the child's annual school report.

At St John's School an internal register is taken at the start of each lesson. The start of lesson 5 register is used to report PM session attendance. The lesson by lesson attendance marks are constantly monitored by the office staff. Any discrepancies are responded to and could result in contact being made to parents to report unauthorized absence / internal truancy.

## **Persistent Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **08.00** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by **08.15** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **08.45** the registers will be closed. In accordance with Government policy, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Leader to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Other Reasons for Absence**

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments. Such absences usually only take up part of a day. School should be informed of such absences in advance and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment. **Pupils will not be allowed to sign out and report to the medical centre unaccompanied by a parent, carer or other named individual.** Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours where possible. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a parent informs school that their child has a medical appointment first thing in the morning i.e. between period 1 and 2, then the appropriate code (M) will be recorded in the register to indicate this.

If a child attends a medical or dental appointment and returns before 12.30 the register entry will be amended to reflect that they attended the second part of our continental school day. Similarly, if a child leaves school to attend a medical/dental appointment before the start of the second session and does not return by 12.30 they will be marked as absent for the second session.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school informing the chain of command of concerns; if a child fails to attend school regularly, without lawful excuse, the parent will be guilty of an offence and may face disciplinary action.

### **Authorised Absences**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before **08.15** on each school day of his/her child's absence from school. If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the attendance clerk will call the family. In the event that contact could not be made the attendance clerk will record this on the register. If there are any child welfare / safety

concerns then the matter may be referred to the Unit Welfare team and/or Social Services. Examples of authorised absences are:

- Illness;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs;
- Absences allowed by the school. These would usually include:
  - Medical appointments;
  - Exclusions;
  - Extreme family emergencies/occasions such as bereavement.

### **Holidays during Term Time**

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence

During term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed very rarely.

Parents should apply by completing the form available from the school office or through our website if they are considering a holiday in term time. All requests must be signed by the Unit Welfare Team before being submitted to the school. This should be done at least 3 weeks before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing or via a telephone call, whether it has been authorised.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy;
- Unexplained absences;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Looking after other children/ birthdays or staying home with visitors;
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school.

Whilst any child may be off school because of illness, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regards to attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will seek to take action immediately.

Joint Services Publication (JSP) 342, Chapter 4, Paragraph 4.1 states that: 'It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that that child receives efficient fulltime education. Failure to ensure that a child of school age receives efficient education will be referred to the Commanding Officer where the parent is a member of the Services or to the parent's Head of Establishment in the case of other entitled persons.'

## Monitoring

The School Governance Committee (SGC) is responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy and the head teacher will report attendance figures termly as part of their report to governors.

This policy has been written with reference to the following:

- The schools core values;
- The Education Act (1996);
- Pupil registration regulations (2013);
- School attendance – departmental advice for maintained schools (October 2014);
- DCYP Policy Directive - Attendance in MOD Schools (September 2016).

## 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. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

1. Form Tutors must complete register on system by 08.15.
2. Attendance Clerk to telephone parents of students marked as absent for Years 7-11 – (First Day Response).
3. Once absence has been confirmed as genuine the attendance clerk will enter appropriate absence code. Parents are not required to send a letter with student's return for that day. However, parents will be asked to send in a letter if absence will last longer than one day.
4. If a student goes home ill and is absent the following day the attendance clerk will not telephone to confirm absence. Parents should then provide a written confirmation of absence. A note in the planner and recorded by the tutor will be sufficient. Email or telephone is acceptable.
5. Form Tutors and Pastoral leaders **must** inform the attendance clerk of a planned absence if known.
6. Form Tutors and Pastoral leaders are to remind students that they must register with the Form Tutor before any other activity i.e. Music Lessons, reporting to Pastoral Leaders
7. Form Tutors must mark a student present or absent using the appropriate code, registers **must** not be left blank.
8. Punctuality – Students who arrive late/miss registration must sign in at the School Office. Tutors / Pastoral leaders are to challenge any patterns of lateness they detect.
9. Registers will be taken within the first ten minutes of each lesson. (Lesson 5 will be used as PM registration for attendance returns).

10. The Attendance Clerk will monitor for and respond to any incidents of internal truancy.
11. The Attendance Clerk will monitor and respond to attendance as per the flow charts attached.
12. If students need to attend appointments during the school day they must be accompanied by parents and signed out correctly by the Attendance Clerk. Those returning to school should be signed in, in a similar fashion.
13. Sixth Form students are to sign in and out in accordance with agreed procedures with the Head of Sixth Form.
14. Requests for absence for events such as family holidays can be granted in compliance with Government /SCE policies.

# ATTENDANCE A

First Day Response  
(See attendance B)

Weekly Reports given to  
Pastoral Leaders & Tutors;  
Rewards given where  
appropriate

Holiday Approval  
Letters. Email notification to  
Pastoral Leaders & Tutors

Biweekly Behaviour and  
Attendance meeting to monitor  
patterns

Unexplained attendance  
letter sent or letters below

Attendance letter 1 sent if attendance below 95%  
or at discretion of pastoral leaders

a) Improved attendance  
letter sent

b) Not improved attendance  
letter 2 sent. Parents meeting  
held

c) Not Improved Attendance.  
Letter 3 sent. SCE  
attendance panel meeting  
held if necessary

Not improved letter 4 sent. Chain of  
Command notified.

# ATTENDANCE B

## ABSENCE – FIRST DAY RESPONSE

