



St Faith's Church of England Primary School Attendance Policy

Rationale

At St Faith's it is our culture to support families in any way we can. Working as a team with families and external services, we aim to provide each child every opportunity to achieve their very best. In order to do this, it is essential that all children attend school regularly and on time. To make the most of the learning opportunities we provide within school, children need to have the continuity of provision, which consistent attendance and punctual arrival allows. It is proven that poor attendance is often linked to poor performance in the classroom. This can result in a child struggling with their relationships with their peers, developing low self-confidence and experiencing a disrupted pattern to their education; all of which can be damaging in the long run. These links between attendance and achievement are strong, and high levels of attendance at school should be a right of each pupil.

Objectives

- To encourage prompt arrival at school [before 8:45am]
- To encourage full attendance
- To record and monitor attendance
- To record and monitor absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure all school staff take an active role in promoting the importance of good and punctual attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To encourage parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or other approved educational provision. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory age who are on the school's admission roll.

Attendance Targets

The school is set attendance targets each year. The Head Teacher and governors, the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] and the local Authority [LA] agree these targets. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The EWO will liaise with the Head Teacher each term and more frequently if there are any attendance issues.

Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age, [five years old], attends school regularly at the school where they are registered.

We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, they will be missed. We will consult all members of the school community including the Education Welfare Service [EWS] in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on registration regulations and the law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and any related issues.

Attendance and punctuality will be an important feature of the School Development Plan. Constant and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

Definitions

All absences, whether authorised or unauthorised are included in the child's attendance record and therefore all absences should be avoided if at all possible.

Authorised Absences

An absence is recorded as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the child's parent has notified the school. Examples of authorised absences include:

1. Child's illness, with doctors note where appropriate
2. Medical appointments, with the appointment card
3. External examinations
4. Educational assessments conducted by approved agencies
5. Religious observances
6. Educational activity at an alternative site [eg: county sports event]
7. Visits to prospective schools

Unauthorised Absences

An absence is recorded as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason and without permission from the school. Examples of unauthorised absences include:

1. Shopping for new shoes
2. Your child staying at home because a parent is ill
3. Having a haircut
4. A birthday treat
5. Term time holiday without permission

All such absences need to be avoided in the interest of ensuring that your child develops a good habit of attending school regularly, allowing them to fulfil their potential academically, socially and emotionally.

Lateness

Registration times are at 08:45, the beginning of the morning session and at some time during the afternoon session. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for your child and for the rest of the class. If your child arrives in school after that time, the computer software will register them as unauthorised for that session, so persistent lateness will also affect your child's attendance figures.

Procedures

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the expectations and procedures. It is the responsibility for the whole school community to promote attendance at school.

On the first day of and any further absence

When a child is ill or absent for any reason, please phone or e-mail the school office and leave a message giving your reason for keeping them at home. Please contact the school before 09:00 where possible. When any child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school attendance officer will endeavour to contact the parent if you have not yet left a message at the front office.

On your child's return to school

When a child returns to school, a note should be brought from the parent, or telephone call made or e-mail sent to explain the absence.

If you need to request a period of authorised absence

If you need to make a request to the Head Teacher for a period of authorised absence, you should collect a Leave of Absence Request Form from the school office. Please return your form as early as possible, so that there is time for the request to be considered and for approval to be given, if appropriate. Any request for leave of absence during term time must be made in advance and by filling out a Leave of Absence Request Form.

Long-term Absence

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school does all it can to send learning material home, so they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school contacts the parent of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school then contacts the Education Welfare Service, which may visit the home and seek to ensure parents understand the seriousness of the situation. The EWO has access to attendance figures and unauthorised absence data. The EWO will become involved when:

- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has begun
- Communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response
- There is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance
- A parent withdraws a child from school, having expressed an intention to educate them otherwise than at school
- A pattern of persistent lateness has developed
- There are child protection concerns

The measures the school will use to communicate with the family to support them in improving attendance include: phone calls; text messages; letters; meeting with the Head Teacher; referral to the EWS and School Attendance Panels [SAP].

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. If legal action is taken a penalty notice of £120.00 may be issued.

The term "parent" used in this policy, is to include "guardian" and "carer".

Approved by governors 12.12.11
Policy updated November 2013
Review date: November 2015