



St John's Primary School Attendance Policy 2019-2020

Introduction

St. John's attaches great importance on children attending school regularly and punctually. Regular and punctual attendance at school underpins successful learning and sets good habits for the future world of employment.

All pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage and support parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance. To this end we will do all we can do to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance, and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all parents or carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children arrive at their school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school promptly of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

We expect that all school staff will:

- Encourage good attendance through a system of reward and recognition.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils.
- Monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when a pupil has failed to attend, where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, to express their concern and to clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns.
- Regularly inform parents of the percentage attendance of all pupils.
- Meet regularly with the Inclusion Service (previously Education Welfare) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Inclusion Service may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- Pupils must be signed out by their parent or carer on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.

Registration and Punctuality

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

- School opens at **8.45am** and registration takes place at **8.55am** and pupils who arrive after **8.55am** will be recorded as late to school.
- If a child/parent arrives at school after 8.55am the student must be signed in to ensure their presence on site is noted, particularly in the case of a fire drill.
- Morning registration will close at **9.25am**. If a student arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- The school day ends at 3.05pm.

Encouraging Attendance

St. John's School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By providing regular attendance statistics
- Accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration
- Class awards for attendance
- Individual awards for punctuality and attendance each week, and 100% attendance each term.

The Headteacher will monitor pupils, inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arrange meetings with them and refer the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- a) On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carers by 10.30am the school will endeavour to contact them promptly by telephone.
- b) If there is no response, the school will continue to try and contact the parent/carers.

If a child's attendance becomes a concern, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss this. If there is no improvement, a further meeting will be arranged and parents may be asked to provide evidence of illness for any absences e.g. GP appointment card, chemist receipt etc.

If there is still no improvement, a referral will be made to Education.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school role until the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The name and address of the new school; the new home address, if it known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

Holidays/Leave of absence

The school holiday dates and INSET days are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/ carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays.

If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. However it is no longer policy to authorise absences due to holidays during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate.

If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised.

Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

The Inclusion Service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school and Inclusion Service Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and Inclusion Service officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance

proposed by the school or Education. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.