



St James Infant & Pre-School

Attendance Policy

Statutory / Non-statutory
Annual review / 2 yearly review

Date policy adopted				
Review date	Nov '19			
Reviewer's name	C Cousins			
Date minuted by committee meeting				
Next review due by	Autumn 2			

St James Infant School

Attendance Policy

Aims of Policy

- To emphasise the importance of high levels of attendance at school
- To make clear to everyone the school's expectations about attendance
- To clarify the legal position and expectations relating to attendance
- To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance

In order for children to achieve their potential they need to have excellent attendance and therefore this is a very important issue to everyone involved at St James Infant School. It is a key indicator of an effective school and as such is included in all OfSTED inspections and contributes towards their overall judgement.

Procedures for recording attendance

The class teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken in the class register. The registers open at 8.55am and close at 9.10am. Any children entering school after the registers have closed, are entered in the late register with a reason recorded by the office staff. The children are then escorted to their classrooms. Any absences are recorded by the office staff after receiving confirmation of the reason for the absence.

If children are absent but there is no confirmation by morning break, the Pastoral Support Officer or office staff will endeavour to contact the parent / carer to ensure the safety of the child. Codes are entered in the class registers to explain the absence (see attached list). The Department for Education has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences and activities that would classify as unauthorised.

Procedures for promoting regular attendance

A range of rewards are used to promote good attendance, both at individual and class level.

All staff are clear about their role in promoting attendance. Parent / carer and children are encouraged to understand the importance of attendance and punctuality for successful learning.

This issue is regularly addressed through newsletters, parent' evenings, assemblies and work in class. Attendances and absences are also included in a pupil's annual school report. The Office Manager, Pastoral Support Officer and Head teacher will regularly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance, including patterns of absence.

Dealing with absence

The PSO will investigate any unconfirmed absence, in the first instance. If absence continues or is not authorised, the Head teacher will become involved. Where the parent / carer cannot be contacted by telephone, a letter will be written and posted as soon as possible. Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. In extreme circumstances the PSO may

require medical evidence to validate a reason provided by the parent. If a child's attendance is consistently below 95% their parents will be invited to attend a 'Attendance Panel', with the aim of putting in place an 'Attendance Contract'. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the head/PSO and may lead to a penalty notice being issued.

A 'Traffic Light' system is used to clearly advise parents about their child's attendance. Twice a year parents are given a red, orange (amber) or green letters. A red letter advises the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 90% (persistent absenteeism) their child's attendance will be monitored weekly and if no improvement is seen they may be asked to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. Children with attendance between 90-95% receive an amber letter and 95% a green.

Parent / carer and children are made aware of what they miss if they are absent from school and are encouraged to catch up with their work. Parent / carer are routinely contacted in cases of poor attendance and steps are taken to build positive relationships with, and to support, particularly hard-to-reach families. Effective links with a number of agencies ensure that a 'joined-up' approach is used to plan and implement appropriate intervention with individuals or groups experiencing attendance difficulties. When a child has been absent from school for an extended period consideration will be given as to whether a reintegration plan is required.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil is absent, we will fulfil our responsibility by contacting the parent / carer on the **1st Day of absence** and continuing to make every effort to locate the pupil. The PSO is required to try and contact the family by home phone, mobile, letter and lastly make a home visit to ascertain if the child is still residing at the address the school has. **In some circumstances a home visit will be made earlier if the child is being monitored by the Welfare team.** If the pupil is still absent by the **10th consecutive school day**, we will contact the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team and make a formal online referral to the Children Missing from Education Team (CME). The CME is responsible for ensuring that Northamptonshire County Council implements the statutory duty to have tracking and monitoring policies and procedures in place for locating children missing from education in Northamptonshire. The CME Team aim to ensure that the tracking processes for children who are missing from education are effective, cohesive and multi-agency, which will enable Northamptonshire County Council through the CME Team to implement its statutory responsibilities on behalf of the Local Authority.

Children who leave the country will automatically be reported to the CME team. The school is responsible for gathering evidence to support the CME team track the child.

Children can become missing from education for a number of reasons. For example:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stop attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent / carer
- Fail to complete a transition between providers
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile, e.g. parent / carers in the Armed Forces, Gypsy, Romany & Traveller families and Economic Migrants
- Children at risk of a forced marriage, children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Children from armed forces
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Trafficked children

Leave of Absences

The school supports the view that every lesson counts. Leave of absence in term time can only be authorised in **very** exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Initially parent/carers meet with PSO to discuss requests for absences and collect an absence form. Then all leave of absence requests must be made in writing to the head prior to the leave being taken. Any leave of absence that has not been authorised by the head will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Please see appendix one for examples of authorised and unauthorised absence.

Holiday in term time

As from September 2013 legislation has changed relating to school attendance. As a result of this legislation head teachers will no longer be able to authorise any absence for the purpose of a holiday, for any children of compulsory school age, during term time. Any holiday for those children in term time will be treated as unauthorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices

If a request is for 5 or more days consecutive leave and is not authorised and meets the criteria outlined in the Penalty Notice Checklist, it may be referred to the EES for a fixed penalty notice to be issued. A fixed penalty notice may be issued to each parent which will incur a fine of £60.00 for each child. (2 parent family, 2 children equal £240.00). In addition to this, any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a six week period could incur a penalty fine. Fixed Penalty notices can only be issued with prior written notification. If a school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days, the Education and Inclusion Partnership team may consider a Penalty Notice is not appropriate. In these instances the matter may proceed to a prosecution.

Lateness

School doors open at 8.45am and the registers open at 8.55am. Doors are then closed at 9.00am and the registers are closed at 9.10. Any child entering school after 9.00am is considered 'late' but only recorded as late if they arrive after the registers close. And a reason will be recorded. If a child arrives after 9.30am they are classed as absent for that session and an appropriate code is recorded. In exceptional circumstances, for example heavy snow, the registers may be kept open for a longer period.

Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the office staff will inform the Head teacher/PSO who will take appropriate action. Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken which are recorded as an unauthorised absence, are also subject to Penalty Notices.

The Role of the Class Teacher

- The teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken. The register must be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session.
- To inform the Head Teacher/PSO of any concerns regarding persistent absence or lateness.
- To speak to the parent / carer regarding unexplained absence or lateness.

The Role of the Pastoral Support Worker (PSO)

- The PSO will investigate any unconfirmed absence on the first day of absence by telephoning the child's contact numbers to find a reason for the absence.
- To support families experiencing difficulties.
- To jointly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance and lateness.
- To keep a log of any actions / conversations with parents / carers.
- Relay any Leave of Absence request forms to class teachers.
- To draw up and monitor Parent Contract
- To report CME to Local Authority

The Role of Office/Admin Staff

- To monitor completion of class registers on a daily basis.
- To provide the Head Teacher with regular attendance and late monitoring print outs.
- To instigate regular Late Gates.
- To record attendance using the SIMS attendance register. The appropriate codes must be used (see appendix) as agreed.
- Record any absence notification (for telephone messages) on the office whiteboard if message has been received in the office. The appropriate absence code will be entered into the register.
- To jointly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance and lateness.
- **To jointly investigate unconfirmed absences.**

The Role of the Parent / Carer

- It is the statutory duty of every parent / carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996). Parent / carer can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late.
- Parent / carer must contact the school on the first day of absence notifying the school the reason why the child will not be attending.
- Where a message confirming absence has not been received, an explanation will be requested from the parent / carer.

Monitoring

- Governor presence in school on "late gate" mornings.
- Registers and the late register will be monitored by Head Teacher and the office staff.
- The school has adopted a "staged approach" to absence and lateness, although these letters may be adapted for individual circumstances.
- Persistent absence is monitored and addressed weekly.

- The Governing Body regularly monitor attendance at the Performance and Standards committee meetings.
- To attend 'Attendance Panels'

This policy will be reviewed annually

Reviewed November 2020

Reviewed by Clare Cousins November 2019

Appendix 1 - Authorised / Unauthorised absence

Authorised

- **Illness**
- **Emergency and planned medical appointments**
- **Days for specific religious observance**
- **School closure**

May be authorised in exceptional circumstances

- **When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis**
- **Family wedding / civil partnership**
- **Educational opportunity**
- **Visit to a new school**
- **Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time**

Unauthorised

- **Family holidays**
- **Family trips**
- **Birthdays and other celebrations**
- **Poor weather where the school remains open**