

St Francis of Assisi
Church of England Primary
School

Attendance Policy
Document

To be implemented September 2017 (to be reviewed July 2018)

Policy Aims

We believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Staff, pupils and parents need to work together to enable this to happen. Any problems hindering full attendance need to be identified and acted upon as quickly as possible. The aim of the school is to facilitate their pupil's regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to achieve their full academic potential.

It is important to note that it is the legal duty of those with parental responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. By law, parents/carers are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age, are in receipt of an education as a registered pupil at a school. Children who are registered at a school are expected to attend regularly and **absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or the child is authorised to be absent by the Head Teacher.**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a valid reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the Head Teacher of the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the Head Teacher of the school does not approve absence)

Responsibilities

School will ensure the following:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
 - This is currently completed at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon).
 - The school uses electronic registers and absence codes are used from this system.
- Early contact with parent/carer when a pupil fails to attend school – unless a good reason has already been provided.
 - The school office will contact parents/carers if a reason has not been recorded.
- Prompt and confidential action on any identified problems.
 - This may be through discussions with the class teacher, school office or the Head Teacher.
- Measures are taken to promote good attendance.
- First day response actions take place (see below).

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.
- They provide the school with three telephone contacts and keep the school updated of any changes to contact details.

We expect that pupils:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

To encourage maximum attendance there must be consistent employment of this policy.

Further Absence Information

Absence Due To Illness

If a child is absent due to illness, parents/carers should call the school on **each day** of the absence stating a reason. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused parents would be informed.

If contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents/carers then the school will contact the home by telephone call. **If there is no contact, the absence will be deemed unauthorised until contact has been made.** Should this route be unsuccessful, a letter will be sent home on behalf of the school.

First Day Response

If a child is absent from school and the school has not yet received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The school administrator will follow this system:

- Telephone parents' contact numbers(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- School administrator and/or Senior member of staff to speak to the parents/carers at home time, if they are in school to pick up other children
- Speak to the parent/carer face to face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers if required.
- If contact cannot be made by phone call to the parent/carer, all telephone numbers provided by parents will be used to make contact. Failure to make contact to any number provided by a parent/carer will result in a home visit by a member of staff.
- The parent/carer will be asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. If a legitimate reason for absence has not been made within 2 days of the absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents/Carers are also requested to make any medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. If appointments are allocated during school hours, and a pupil's attendance is below 90%, evidence should be provided – this could include an appointment card or letter from the hospital. **If evidence cannot be provided, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.**

Lateness and Punctuality

Poor punctuality is to be avoided. If your child is late to school this can result in them missing work and vital inputs at the start of lessons. Pupils who arrive late miss important information at the beginning of the day's session. Not only is their education disadvantaged by this, but it can also disrupt the management of the class in general and other pupils.

Pupils are expected to be in their line in the playground by 8.55 a.m. ready to be collected by the class teacher. Registers are marked between 9.00am and 9.05 am and children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by this time. At 9.15am registers are closed. If a child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark in the register to show they are on site, but this will not count as a present mark and **it will be classed as an unauthorised absence.**

Leave of Absence During Term Time

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are absent, they are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons on their return to school. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which the school and parents/carers must seek to avoid.

The Department for Education have made amendments to regulations with regard to school attendance. From 1st September 2013, regulations specify that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. From September 2017, we will not grant any leave of absence for pupils during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (see below). **Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the Head Teacher using the appropriate request form (Appendix 1) stating the reason for and the length of the request.** Submission of the request does not guarantee authorisation.

The Head Teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence the Head Teacher will also consider:

- The impact for the students' academic progress
- The pupil's attendance over the academic year.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening illness or critical illness of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (medical evidence may be required)
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Head Teachers should use their discretion having heard from parents/carers about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Religious observance
- Weddings of parents and siblings

Examples of circumstances **NOT** considered as exceptional include:

- Holidays taken in term time due to parental work commitments or costs
- Holidays for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where the person is seriously ill (medical evidence may be required)
- Pilgrimages by parents

Family emergencies require careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate, to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care at difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background at times of uncertainty.

Following receipt of a written request for leave in term time the Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is genuine, exceptional and urgent reasons for a child to be absent during term time.

Monitoring Attendance

Persistent Absence

A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90% regardless of whether it is authorised absence. School monitors attendance on a regular basis and is supported through termly register checks from the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teacher's role. They have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in the class, for collecting notes explaining absences, and for maintaining an accurate register.

Early intervention may include communication with parents/carers, by face-to-face discussions, telephone, or letter.

If the teacher or administrator has concerns about a pupil's attendance, those concerns will be discussed with the Head Teacher who will decide on appropriate action. This may involve a letter to parents/carers, notifying of punctuality or attendance concerns, further monitoring and arrangements to meet with parents/carers to discuss further. (Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 4, Appendix 5 and Appendix 6)

A regular review of attendance will continue following this:

- If attendance has improved, this should be recognised by school and there should be no further action.
- If attendance has not improved, then options include inviting the parents/carers into school to further discuss attendance concerns and exploring ways in which support may be offered to bring about change. An Early Help Assessment will be offered to the parents to identify any additional support required.

Further advice and support about monitoring and managing concerns may be sought from the school's Local Authority Attendance Officer who also completes termly register checks.

- If no change has been effected in a pupil's attendance and the absences remain unauthorised, then referral to the Attendance Officer may be appropriate. The Head Teacher, in liaison with the School Administrator, will prioritise the list of students to be referred.
- Weekly/fortnightly register checks of absentees close to or below an attendance rate of 90% will be carried out following discussions with the LA Attendance Officer.
- Meetings with the LA Attendance Officer will be held on a regular basis (to be decided by school and the Attendance Officer).
- The purpose of the meetings will be to:
 - Discuss individual pupils who are close to being identified as 'persistent absentees'
 - Discuss and agree upon desired/necessary actions to referrals.
 - Report on home visits, outcomes of intervention

Where attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, the LA Attendance Officer and school, with a view to improving attendance, will undertake a period of more intensive intervention that will result in the legal process being initiated.



St Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School
Notification of Absence of Child (Reception-Year 6)

This form is to be completed by the child's parent or guardian and forwarded to the school office as soon as possible. The confirmation slip will be returned to you. Please note the following:

An annual attendance record of 98% means a pupil has missed the equivalent of almost a school week over the course of a year.

A two week period of absence during term time means a pupil can have a maximum yearly attendance of 94.7%.

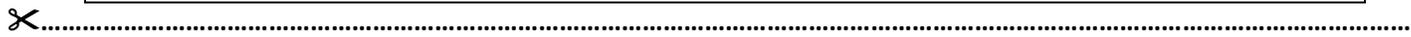
A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90% regardless of whether it is authorised absence.

Name of child:	Class:
Address:	

Reason for absence:	
First day of absence:	Last day of absence: Date returning to school:
Number of days absent on this occasion:	
Please remember that the Head Teacher will only authorise FIVE days absence in <u>exceptional circumstances</u> during one academic year (evidence must be attached to this form). Holidays will not be authorised.	
Parent/Guardian signature:	Date:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Number of days absent on this occasion	
Number of days already authorised/unauthorised this year	
Total of days this year	
Authorised signature:	
Authorisation code	
Date:	



Confirmation of Absence Notification

Childs Name:	
Absence Dates:	
These dates have been authorised	
These dates have not been authorised due to:	
No exceptional circumstances given	
Notes:	
Signed:	Date:

Initial letter regarding attendance concerns



Date:

Dear Parent/Carer of _____,

During a recent register check, I noticed that your child's attendance is currently at%. I have attached a copy of your child's Registration Certificate for you to look at.

I would like to request that you make every effort to ensure that your child attends school every day unless there is a valid reason for absence.

We value your child's education and any time he/she is absent, he/she is missing vital sessions which are detrimental to him/her reaching his/her full educational potential.

Please ensure that you contact school to discuss any absence with us, preferably on your child's first day of absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Louise Probets

Head Teacher

Second letter regarding attendance concerns



Date:

Dear Parents/Carers of _____,

I wrote to you on to inform you that your child's attendance was%.

Unfortunately, your child's attendance has not improved since then and his/her absence is now%. Your child is now at risk/classified as a persistent absence.

It is essential that we work together to support 's attendance at school as his/her absence is having a detrimental effect upon his/her learning.

I would like to invite you into school to discuss this further on at We may, during this meeting, complete an attendance improvement plan or arrange for an Early Help Assessment to be initiated.

If this date and time is not possible, please contact me via the school office to make an alternative arrangement.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Louise Probets

Head Teacher

Third letter regarding attendance concerns



Date:

Dear Parents/Carers of _____ ,

I wrote to you on to inform you that your child's attendance was%.

Unfortunately, your child's attendance has not improved since then and his/her absence is now%. Your child is now at risk/classified as a persistent absence.

Therefore, I must inform you that if your child's attendance has not improved during the next two weeks, I will be referring the matter to our Local Authority Attendance Officer.

It is essential that we work together to support 's attendance at school as his/her absence is having a detrimental effect upon his/her learning.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Louise Probets

Head Teacher

Initial letter regarding lateness



Date:

Dear Parents/Carers of _____ ,

During a recent register check, I noticed that your child has been late for school on a number of occasions.

The school doors open at 8.55 a.m. and the children should be ready to enter school at this time and be present for the register. I appreciate that there are some situations where lateness may be unavoidable. However, when your child is late, he/she misses important information at the beginning of the day's session. Not only is their education disadvantaged by this, but it can also disrupt the management of the class in general and other pupils.

The school will be monitoring your child's punctuality over the next two weeks. If there is no improvement during this time, I will be in touch to request a meeting with you to discuss the matter further.

Any lateness after the close of registration is counted as unauthorised absence and, if we fail to work in partnership to improve this, we may need to refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Louise Probets

Head Teacher

Appendix 6

Second letter regarding lateness



Date:

Dear Parents/Carers of _____ ,

I wrote to you on to inform you that your child had been late for school on a number of occasions.

I would therefore like you to attend a meeting with myself and your child's class teacher on at

If this time is not convenient, please do not hesitate to contact me. The school has a duty to monitor attendance as the Local Authority Attendance Officer makes regular register inspections. She also contacts all families with patterns of regular absences/lateness.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Louise Probets

Head Teacher