



## **GOVERNOR POLICY 53**

### **Attendance Policy**

- Policy first agreed: May 2012
- Review undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team and Chair of Governors
- Policy Review Period: Annually
- This revision: April 2018

#### **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff members 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.

#### **Introduction:**

All Saints Primary School aims to provide a high quality education so that all children are able to reach their full potential. In order to do this our children need to develop positive feelings about their learning and a responsible attitude to recognising the value of good attendance and punctuality.

Most parents and carers share our desire that their children are successful in their learning and the link between attainment and attendance has long been proven. Good attendance is essential in ensuring educational progress and poor attendance impacts not only the achievements of individuals but of the whole school. Attendance is examined as part of the Ofsted school inspection process when making a judgement on behaviour and safety. We believe good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community - parents, pupils, staff and governors. We aim for excellence and for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

#### **Why regular attendance is important:**

- Research shows that educational progress in Primary Schools significantly starts to drop when attendance falls below 96%. 92% attendance sounds very good, but still means that one day's learning is lost every month. 80% attendance means that one day of learning is lost per week.
- Children whose attendance drops below 95% reduce their chances of achieving the expected level in English and Maths (at the end of Year 6) by 15% and this steadily declines with lower attendance.
- Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. Permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Objectives:**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives

### **The Law relating to attendance:**

- Under the 1988 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.
- The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.
- Under the Education (pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 only the school (and not the parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate national code.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case by case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. The Sherborne Schools Partnership share common guidelines and policies on attendance.
- Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absences are recorded as a result).
- If leave of absence is taken without the request being agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with **Dorset County Council Children's Services Penalty Notice Protocol** which is attached as an appendix to this policy. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.
- In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6), the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate a prompt return to suitable education.
- The school scrupulously monitors requests for absence from pupils with an ethnicity linked to countries where female genital mutilation (FGM) is practised. (Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Gambia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Senegal, Chad, Mala, Uganda, UAE, India, Tanzania, Malaysia)

### **The Law relating to Safeguarding**

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.
- Safeguarding: A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses attendance, behaviour management, Health and Safety, access to the curriculum and Anti-bullying. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

## **Children Missing Education (CME)**

The government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 2006) to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll, nor being educated other than at school or who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or, have been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This will be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, and before deleting the pupil's name from the register. The local authority can then, as part of its duty identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

## **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. It is the policy of All Saints to celebrate achievement and attendance. Attendance is a critical factor in a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils. We will give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and

that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times. Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, the absence should not be excused as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

We monitor the attendance of individuals closely.

- Parents/Carers of pupils with attendance below 92% that is not due to an on-going medical condition will be contacted by letter.
- If attendance fails to improve or drops to 90% parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting.
- If attendance reaches 85% the Local Authority will be notified.

#### **All Saints CE VC Primary School will:**

- Report whole school and class attendance on a weekly bulletin;
- Report authorised and unauthorised attendance to parents at least termly
- Write to parents/carers whose child(ren)'s attendance rate has dropped below 92% offering support towards improvement. If there is no improvement or reasonable explanation/medical reasons for non attendance, an appointment will be made with the parents/carers in order to plan for improvement. Support from the Early Intervention team may be sought at this stage and definitely if attendance drops to 85%.
- Celebrate good attendance by rewarding good attendance each term and annually – 100% and 98%
- Celebrate weekly the class with the highest attendance.

#### **Understanding types of absence:**

There will always be unavoidable reasons for children to be off school. It is important that parents understand that the school would not want to be viewed as anything other than supportive with families going through difficult or exceptional times. Schools would not be penalised for the absence of children with genuine reasons for non-attendance.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Authorised absence cannot be granted retrospectively. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been granted. These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

#### **Holidays in term time:**

Taking a child on holiday in term time often interrupts the learning of the whole class as teachers have to spend time helping children catch up. We ask our parents to respect our policy and not take holidays in term time. Parents/carers needing exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences up to 10 days within one academic year should complete a leave of absence form in advance.

## **Persistent Absentees (PA)**

A pupil is defined as a 'persistent absentee' by the DfE when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the school will seek parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly and PA pupils are tracked carefully through our pastoral system. We will also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Officer who will offer support to the family through the Early Intervention Service.

## **First Day Response**

All Saints operates a First Day Response system - if a child is absent and a notification is not received, parents/carers will be contacted to establish the reason why. If a child's absence continues over a period of a few days and the school has not been notified by the parents or carers, contact will be made again to establish when the child is likely to return to school. Rarely, sudden, serious circumstances do occur, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent/carer of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register. Parents should inform the school of any relevant factors that could affect a child's attendance.

## **Illness and Medical Appointments - Advice to Parents**

These measures will lower the impact of absence for health reasons:

- Make doctor/dentist/optician appointments at the end of the school day
- Ensure that the time taken out of the school day for appointments is kept to the minimum. Children do not necessarily need to be off school for the entire morning, afternoon or day.

If your child is ill, it's likely to be due to one of a few minor health conditions. Whether you send your child to school will depend on how severe you think the illness is. You may ask yourself the following questions:

*Is your child well enough to do the activities of the school day?*

*Does your child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?*

*Would you take a day off work if you had this condition?*

## **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absence persists;
- Refer the matter to the Early Intervention Team if attendance moves below 90% without evident justifiable cause.

Parents/Carers may wish to contact the Early Intervention Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. This telephone number is available from the school office.

## **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and vital information. Late arriving pupils can feel uncomfortable and also disrupt lessons.

The school day starts at 8:55am and we expect your child to be in school at that time. By law, schools must take morning and afternoon registers and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

Registers are marked by 9.10am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, 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. Afternoon registration is taken at 1:15pm.

If a child has a persistent late record his or her parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem.

Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the attendance officer. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

## **Targets:**

All Saints School's targets are:

- for attendance rates to reach 97%
- for all absences to be legitimate and authorised
- to increase the numbers of pupils who achieve 100% attendance in the school year
- to reduce the numbers of families taking holidays during term time
- for all children to arrive on time for school, unless there is a legitimate reason for not doing so.

## The School Attendance Service

All Saints liaises with the Dorset's School Attendance Service, which regularly carries out register checks.



DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL – EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 – Regulation 8



### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

I request leave of absence for the child(ren) named below from All Saints Primary School during the period given.

Name(s) of child: ..... Class: .....

Children: ..... Class: .....

Absence from:	To:	No. of school days taken:
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Parents will understand the importance of regular education and it is hoped that requests for absence will only be made when there is no alternative available, therefore some explanatory reasons for the absence should be given in the space provided OVERLEAF.

\* REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE BOOKINGS ARE COMPLETED TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Signed:	Dated:
(a parent/carer with whom the pupil usually lives)	

All Saints Primary School aims to provide a high quality education so that all children are able to reach their full potential. In order to do this our children need to develop positive feelings about their learning and a responsible attitude to recognising the value of good attendance and punctuality.

#### Please remember that:

Good attendance is essential in ensuring educational progress and poor attendance impacts not only the achievements of individuals but of the whole school.

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Education Authority and School.

Taking a child on holiday in term-time often interrupts the learning of the whole class. Whilst every endeavour will be made by the school that all children achieve their best, deciding to take your child out of school will assume an acceptance on your part that the gap in learning may not be bridged.

#### All Saints Primary School has agreed the following:

No Leave of Absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays taken in term time around crucial assessment times will not be authorised, for this reason no authorisation will be given for holidays in May.

The school will monitor the attendance of our pupils and work closely with the Locality Early Intervention Teams to support children whose attendance levels are causing concern.

Please accept that a refusal to authorise an absence reflects our commitment to our children's achievement.



### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Name(s) of child(ren): .....

Your recent request has been APPROVED / NOT APPROVED for these dates: .....

Signed:	Dated:
(on behalf of the Governing Body of the school)	

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL – EDUCATION COMMITTEE



Explanatory Reasons: (TO BE COMPLETED WHEN SUBMITTING APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE)

#### Notes:

- Regulation 8 states  
 (1) Leave of absence may only be granted by person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor (ie Governors) of the school  
 (3) Subject to paragraph (4), on application made by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to go away on holiday.  
 (4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than the school says leave of absence in any school year
- This form should be completed by the parent or guardian and submitted to the Headteacher of the child's school as early as possible before the holiday begins. Absence without the Headteacher's approval will be unauthorised, and therefore illegal.
- If more than one child from the family is to be absent from the same school, only ONE form need to be completed, but each child must be named on the form.
- If the request is for more than two weeks absence, (10 school days), the parent should write to the Headteacher to explain why the circumstances are so exceptional as to warrant such an absence.
- Parents should not assume that approval will automatically be given, so early application is always wise.
- Parents should be aware that they are liable to prosecution if attendance falls below 85% under the 'Fast Track' arrangements.

