

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FINDON**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**



Reviewed:	
Next Review:	November 2016
Person Responsible:	

## Overview

A child who is not at school is missing out on part of his or her education. Likewise a child who is late for school is missing out on a very important part of the school day, including setting out the context for the work for the day.

Our aim is for the highest level of attendance possible and for all absences to be explained with acceptable reasons. Alongside this we want to have all our children in class ready to start the day promptly.

### **The Government says:**

- **There is a legal responsibility for you to send your child to school every day.**
- **Your child should be in school for at least 95% of all sessions.**
- **School is in session for 190 days a year leaving parents a further 175 days a year in which to have days out together and take a holiday.**

### **1. Key Principles**

It is vital that parents and schools work together. We follow the West Sussex guidance which sets out the following principles:

- All registered pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- All children, irrespective of individual circumstances, should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly.
- The school and the Local Authority, together with any external agencies, will work together with the parents or carers for the best interest of pupils.
- The school's expectations of regular attendance will be made clear from the outset.
- Where necessary, intervention and enforcement measures will be taken, especially with regard to unauthorised absences and lateness.

Parents should ensure that their children are properly dressed, and have all the things they need and are in a condition fit to learn.

## **2. Aims**

- To help parents/carers understand the need for their children to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To encourage good habits in attendance from the first day of school.
- Ensure that parents/carers and staff are fully aware of the need to keep accurate records of attendance and the necessary procedures.
- To minimise the number of absences and late arrivals.

## **3. Records of Attendance**

Children's attendance details are recorded in registers at the beginning of morning (8.50 am) and afternoon (1.00 pm) sessions of each school day.

The school office collates information about absences, taking phone calls and emails from parents. These are recorded in the registers and session absence reports are produced from the school database.

The school is registered with the Data Protection Register as a data user under the 1984 Data Protection Act.

If there is a concern about a child's attendance, the Headteacher will notify parents/carers.

Patterns of absence or lateness or other concerns are shared with the Education Welfare Officer who regularly visits the school to check attendance records and discuss any problems. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents who may be having difficulties in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Where necessary legal action may be taken.

Certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% attendance each term.

#### 4. **Lateness**

The school would be pleased to discuss with parents any issues around lateness as required. Lateness is discouraged and persistent lateness is unacceptable.

If a child arrives late and misses registration they must be signed in at the school office

#### 5. **Absence**

All absences are registered as authorised or unauthorised. Examples of authorised absences include:

- **Genuine illness:** If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence is treated as authorised. Children who experience long term absences are supported both during and after their absence through direct contact with the parents/carers. The school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child.
- **Medical or dental appointments:** Pupils' absence for medical or dental appointments may also be authorised, although where possible, parents should try to make appointments out of school time. If a pupil has an appointment during school time then the school should be warned beforehand and the parent must report to the office to sign their child in or out of school.
- **Religious observance:** Parents should give advance warning of absence if it is necessary for their child to take part in a day of religious observance.
- **Education off-site** eg an educational visit arranged by the school.
- **Extreme family emergencies** eg bereavement. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The school does not have to accept the parents' offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the reason offered, the

reason given for an absence is not acceptable or if no reason is given, then the absence is treated as unauthorised.

- If children leave school during the school day for any reason, they must be signed out by the school office.

## **6. Other Absences**

- **Special occasions:** Parents should notify the school if they wish their child to be absent because of a special occasion such as a family wedding. The school will consider each request on an individual basis. Absence for a birthday or a family day out would however be considered as unauthorised. However, parents are asked to be honest with the school about such an absence.
- **Family Holidays:** Term time holidays are not permitted unless there are genuine mitigating circumstances and the school is convinced of the validity of these. Parents should endeavour to book holidays out of term time.
- No absences are authorised at the start of the academic year (September).
- No absences are authorised throughout the National Curriculum assessment period for Year 6 during May and for Year 1 and 2 during May/June.

## **7. Requesting Absence From School**

- Parents are asked to complete a 'Request for Absence in School Time' form, available from the school office.
  - A child's absence record will be taken into account when considering requests for withdrawal from learning and authorisation will not be given to children with less than 90% attendance.
  - Each case will be considered on its merit. The 'Request for Absence in School Time' form will be returned either agreeing that the absence will be authorised or classifying it as an unauthorised absence.
9. Fixed Penalty Notices A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if there are

10 or more unauthorised absences within a 10 week period, (1 morning and 1 afternoon count as 2 sessions). The FPN currently stands at £60 per parent, per child.