



**'Together we will do our best for Jesus'**

### **Introduction**

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **Aims**

This policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

### **Definitions**

**Authorised absence.** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parent/Carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parent/carers will be classified as authorised. The school classifies authorised absence as when:

- the child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- the child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their faith (school should be advised before event)
- The child has a medical appointment; (school should be advised before event)
- The child is granted leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (school should be advised before event). Absence due to holiday is not considered exceptional circumstances

**Unauthorised absence.** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer, or when the school believes a child is away from school with the support of a parent/carer but without good reason for example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parent/carers will:**

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness

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- Ensure any child arriving after 8.50am accesses the school via the main entrance and 'sign' child into school in school office
- Contact the school on the first day of any absence before 9.30 am, offering a reason (reasons will only be accepted from parent / carers)
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g., medical appointment)
- Only take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused
- Work closely with the school and Local Authority Educational Attendance Officer to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.

### Teachers will:

- Positively support school attendance wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount.
- Take registration at 8.50am each morning and at 1.15pm each afternoon
- Return registers to the school office by 9.15 am / 1.30pm each day. (Registers close each morning at 9.20am each day)
- Pass on any reasons for absence to office staff
- Keep all written correspondences from parent/carers regarding reasons for absence for 1 year
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- Present attendance records to parent/carers at the spring parent/carer consultation meeting.

### School Administrator will:

- Upload registers daily to school data base
- Contact parent / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am
- Record reasons for absence in 'absence book' kept in office
- Record pre-notified reasons for absence in register
- Record lateness (arriving after 8.55am) in 'late register'
- Record all messages regarding future absence in registers
- Record lateness with 'u' or 'l' coding as appropriate
- Ensure all children leaving or arriving during the school day are signed in or out in the school's 'signing in book'.

### Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised, school will meet with parents / carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reasons for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90%, we will contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence we will agree a plan with you to ensure that attendance improves.

### Leave of Absence

If pupils are to reach their potential, they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, uninterrupted school attendance is a key factor in helping pupils reach their potential. Every effort should always be made to avoid disruption to a pupil's education.

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Head Teachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Head Teacher.

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The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short, 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time the Head Teacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the **Request for Leave of Absence form** (available from the school website or hard copies from the school office). Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised.

Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 5 days (10 school sessions) will be asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher to explain the circumstances.

### **Unauthorised Absences and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)**

Penalty notices can be issued for general non-school attendance and unauthorised lateness, or unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time.

The current BCP Code of Conduct defines general non-attendance as at least 10% over a specific warning period of at least 15 school days and an unauthorised leave of absence as absence for at least 10 sessions (five days) over a rolling 12-month period.

Any known dishonest reasons which are given for an absence (e.g., where a child tells of a holiday they have been on, and the parent has informed school of a sickness) will be challenged by school.

### **Lateness**

A child must be signed in if arriving at school after 8.50am by parent. If a parent fails to do so the parent is reminded of the procedure by text.

Parents that repeatedly fail to sign their child in each morning will be telephoned by the school. Parents of pupils who are repeatedly late are invited to a school meeting to discuss support. Previously contacted parents are monitored bi-weekly. A log and chronology are kept for lateness.

### **Children missing in Education (Sept 2016)**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'.

As a school we follow the school's responsibilities in "Children Missing in Education" (2016) which are as follows:

- Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- Schools must monitor pupil's attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. In our case this is through termly meetings with the LA attendance officer or when the absence reaches the threshold for intervention. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed

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from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school *does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.*

- *Schools must also arrange full-time education for the excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.*
- *Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance.*

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The headteacher will provide a termly report to Governors. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

### **FIRST DAY ABSENCE PROCEDURE**

1. Parents should telephone or send a message to the school promptly by 9.30am if their child will not be attending school. A message can be left on the school answering machine.
2. If a pupil is absent without explanation by the time the registers are closed, the teacher must inform the office and record the child as an 'unauthorised absence'.
3. The office will then telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for absence and ask them to put this in writing when their child returns to school.
4. If the parents cannot be contacted, then the emergency contact numbers will be rung and that person will be asked to contact the parents as quickly as possible, with the request that the parents/emergency contact person telephone the school within an hour.

Agreed FGB: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021