

# **Attendance Policy**

**St. Lawrence CE (VA)  
Primary School**

With

Little Lawrences

**Napton**

Updated April 2016

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This document is to enable the Governing Body of the school to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under Section 175 and that the school complies with legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of children of the Education Act 2002.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 St Lawrence CE Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community are informed of the policy and have access to it.

## **2 SCHOOL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at St Lawrence CE Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### **2.2 Head Teacher's Responsibilities**

The Headteacher will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with staff, pupils and parents(who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body termly. He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **2.3 Registration**

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Class teachers (who take the registers) and office staff (who process the registers) are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

## REGISTER CODES

### CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING

/ Present (AM) Present

\ Present (PM) Present

**B** Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) Approved Education Activity

**C** Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)  
Authorised absence

**D** Dual registration (ie pupil attending other establishment) Approved Education Activity

**E** Excluded (no alternative provision made) Authorised absence

**F** Extended family holiday (agreed) Authorised absence

**G** Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) Unauthorised absence

**H** Family holiday (agreed) Authorised absence

**I** Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) Authorised absence

**J** Interview Approved Education Activity

**L** Late (before registers closed) Present

**M** Medical/Dental appointments Authorised absence

**N** No reason yet provided for absence Unauthorised absence

**O** Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) Unauthorised absence

**P** Approved sporting activity Approved Education Activity

**R** Religious observance Authorised absence

**S** Study leave Authorised absence

**T** Traveller absence Authorised absence

**U** Late (after registers closed) Unauthorised absence

**V** Educational visit or trip Approved Education Activity

**W** Work experience Approved Education Activity

**X** Non-compulsory school age absence Not counted in possible attendances

**Y** Enforced closure Not counted in possible attendances

**Z** Pupil not yet on roll Not counted in possible attendances

**#** School closed to pupils Not counted in possible attendances

ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and **1.15 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.15 am** and **1.30 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.5 on page 7).

## 2.4 Categorising Absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked no reason given unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. Where no reason is given by a parent/carer after 10 days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head teacher.

ii) St Lawrence Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at St Lawrence Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's

absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 10 days**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absences may be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance.

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;

(f) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for an agreed period.**

iv) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent after a period of 10 days;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil being taken shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## **2.5 Approved educational activity**

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## **2.6 Staff training**

The Attendance Lead (senior office staff) will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **3. COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

3.1 The Attendance Lead will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, and the governing body. Parents will be given their child's attendance report annually.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs, Looked after Children and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE**

**4.1 Attendance** has a very high profile at St Lawrence Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

#### **4.2 First-day calling**

St Lawrence Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will leave a message for parents/carers to contact the school as soon as possible with a reason for absence. If further attempts at contact are unsuccessful a letter is sent. If no reason is provided within 10 days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

#### **4.3 School Strategies to Tackle Absence**

The Attendance Lead is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that St Lawrence Primary School intervene in non attendance at an early stage. Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence the parents will be contacted to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans will be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them, ie medical evidence.

**4.4** St Lawrence Primary School will organise Attendance / Governor Panels to intervene in levels of non attendance when parents will be invited to discuss the issues of the attendance.

#### **4.5 Referral to the Attendance Compliance Service (ACE)**

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to ACE. Current regulations require schools to inform ACE of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (ie the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools must also inform ACE of every pupil who fails to attend regularly, which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

#### **4.6 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in their classroom for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to ACE.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes are logged as late in the registers. Persistent lateness is followed up via weekly monitoring of registers and a meeting arranged with parents to discuss strategies to improve punctuality.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day are signed out at the main office.

#### **5. TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS**

5.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

5.2 Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

5.3 Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

5.4 Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

5.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

5.6 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

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5.8 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**5.9 Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

## **6 PARENTS' / CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

6.2 St Lawrence Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

6.3 Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify the school on the first day of absence by telephoning the school, leaving a message on the school answer phone if necessary. Alternatively they can email [office@stlawrenceprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stlawrenceprimaryschool.co.uk), giving their reason for their child's absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The school will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

6.4 Children should not be in school before 8:45am as there will be no adult supervision unless specific arrangements have been agreed. Parents/carers are expected to make use of the Before and After School Club if they need to drop off children earlier than this time. They will be charged for this by the Club.

## **7 PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

7.2 Pupils should attend school on time, ready to learn.

## **8 GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 175 (2)

8.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## **9 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The school will review this policy every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary.

