

# St Nicholas CE VC Infant School

## Attendance and Lateness Policy

### Principles Statement

At St. Nicholas School we aim to offer equal opportunities for all of our pupils whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, ability and background. In order to achieve this aim we endeavour to ensure that progress and attainment are equal for all. Our core Christian values underpin our policies and practice. We believe all children have a fundamental right to an education system designed to value and take into account a wide diversity of need and culture. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind against our pupils, parents or staff.

### Safeguarding

St Nicholas Infant School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### Rationale

This policy was written using DfE guidance (Education Act 1996), DfE Keeping Pupil Registers (May 2008) and the Code of Practice for Schools and Education Welfare on Attendance Matters (May 2000). It is updated regularly with the schools' allocated Attendance Advisory Practitioner, to reflect good practice.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantages of educational opportunities available to them by law. Irregular attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. Reasons for lateness and absence may be complex and outside the control of the school, but school must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance.

### **Aims**

- Maximise learning opportunities and promote an ethos of high achievement
- Ensure regular attendance and prompt arrival
- To have every opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge required to meet the aspirations of every Child Matters
- For all children to attend school for a minimum of 96% for each academic year.

### **Objectives**

- Comply with the law
- Ensure that every absence without reason and every lateness is investigated
- Discourage unauthorised absence and late arrival
- Ensure clear communication procedures with well-defined staff roles
- Make effective use of the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP)

### **Promoting Good Attendance**

The School will:

- Distribute information leaflets from the AAP, local authority and DfE to parents
- Distribute essential policy information and other supportive information
- Keep parents informed of regulations through school news letters
- Support pupils with poor attendance
- Monitor and follow up all absence and lateness
- Contact Parents by 10.00am if their child does not arrive at school
- Invite the AAP to pupil worship time and to speak to parents at new parent meetings
- Hold meetings between the Head teacher, AAP and office manager to discuss attendance issues
- Report attendance figures to Governors and parents

### **Meetings with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner**

The AAP makes regular visits to school to discuss attendance issues and inspect registers. Together with a member of staff the AAP assists in identification of pupils causing concern. Actions are agreed.

### **Registers**

Registers are taken twice daily as is the legal requirement. They are kept for three years after closure. There is a list of attendance and absence codes used by the office but teachers are only required to mark pupils present, absent or late. SIMS attendance is used and it shows whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the category. The accumulation of unauthorised absences could result in prosecution and a child's individual attendance records will be used as court evidence.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt the Headteacher on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation.

### **Absences are only authorised for:**

- 1) Sickness – A phone call must be made to school on the first day of absence, and every subsequent day of absence to keep the school informed. On return to school a note explaining the absence is required to confirm the reason for absence.
- 2) Medical and dental appointments – where possible these should be avoided in the school day. If appointments are needed in school time, please email evidence of the appointment to [office@st-nicholas.medway.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-nicholas.medway.sch.uk) or bring this into the school office.

From September 2013 The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is the Headteacher's decision as to whether the request meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Work will always be set for the pupil to complete during any leave approved. The work must be brought into school on the first day.

### **Absence without Leave**

An absence without leave will be marked as unauthorised which could result in a penalty notice (fine). If a penalty notice is issued both parents are liable for a fine of £60 if the fine is paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be an immediate referral to the AAP and a pre start attendance meeting will be held. The school follows the following approach to supporting attendance and punctuality. It may not always be appropriate to progress through all steps or even carry them out in the order listed. Staff responsible will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

1. First day calling for all pupils
2. Monthly meetings with AAP to identify pupils with attendance below 95%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness
3. Referral to AAP
4. Invitation to school attendance clinic or panel
5. Formal letter from AAP leading to prosecution if there is no improvement

### **Lateness**

Every child who arrives 5 minutes later than their start time must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where the adult they are with will record the reason for lateness. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as late after registration and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless exceptional circumstances beyond a parents control have caused the lateness, e.g. closure of roads due to accident. Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the AAP. It can provide grounds for prosecution.

Every child should be collected promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late collection, the school may make a referral to social care for support for the family. If emergency child care is required then the school will provide the parent/carer with the bill for this.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

Those children who have had a good attendance record receive attendance certificates at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6. At the end of the academic year certificates are given for 100% attendance and are presented in our celebration worship\*. Each week the class with the highest attendance is awarded at our celebration worship with a trophy to keep in their class for that week.

### **Other important Points**

No names will be removed from the register without the permission of the Headteacher.

Schools must make reasonable enquiry via the AAP regarding the whereabouts of a pupil absent without notification for a period of more than four weeks, however at this school we will make enquiries as soon as possible if we are concerned. The school secretary will post the child's details on the School to School website ([teachernet.gov.uk](http://teachernet.gov.uk)) and notify the AAP of the name of the child for the Child Missing Education data base.

Policy reviewed: November 2020

G Johnson

\*At present as we follow Covid-19 guidelines celebrations are held within bubbles each week.