



St Clement and St James
CE Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality
Policy 2017

St Clement and St James CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction

St Clement and St James is a school with Christian values at its heart. We are proud of its history and our strong links with the vibrant community to which we belong. We welcome and celebrate every child, helping all children to develop their character and full academic potential. We promote high aspirations and a love of learning through a rich and varied curriculum.

Our values help us show and grow faith, hope and love as the centre of our school. We have a particular emphasis on love as the root of the values we have chosen for our school. When we say love, we mean the definition in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Our values are:

- *Compassion*
- *Creativity*
- *Excellence*
- *Forgiveness*
- *Friendship*
- *Thankfulness*

Full attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. At St Clement and St James CE Primary School, all children on roll must attend school every day when the school is in session. Partnership between home and the school is essential for children to feel that their presence in school is important for their education, and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school will therefore do its best to ensure that children have a happy and consistent educational experience and want to be at school, and it expects parents and carers to play their part to ensure their children arrive on time and attend all sessions of school unless they are genuinely unable to do so.

The school is legally responsible for keeping an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions of each school day. The School is required to report certain levels of absence to the relevant authorities.

Parents also have a legal duty to ensure their school age children registered at a school attend it. Failure to do is an offence and can lead to a penalty notice and even prosecution by the local authority. If found guilty, parents can be fined or even imprisoned.

Absence from school without sufficient reason is likely to have a negative impact on the pupil and the school. It is disruptive to the class if children are regularly missing and hinders the school from meeting its attendance targets. Where there is a problem with attendance, it will therefore be taken up in detail with the parents or carers concerned.

This policy therefore has the following aims:

- To maximise the attendance of all children and in particular to ensure that average attendance meets the annual target set by governors
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly, to identify patterns and trends in the whole school and among different groups, to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the school nurse team, Early Help and ACE (Attendance (statutory), Child employment and entertainment, Elective home education and children missing education) team.

Management of absence

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

A pupil's absence from school may be authorised by the school either before the date in question in response to an advance request from the parent or carer, or after the event in an emergency, with supporting paperwork or evidence.

Absence is only authorised in exceptional circumstances and both home and school are expected to play their part to minimise its impact on the child's education.

Acceptable reasons for authorised absence

Applications for authorised absence will be granted only for exceptional circumstances such as illness, bereavement including funeral attendance, and certain religious festivals in line with local authority guidance.

Advance requests for authorised absence

- With the exception of the religious festivals named below, any advance request for absence must be made in writing at least a week in advance of the absence using the absence form. This includes requests even where the parent may reasonably expect the absence to be authorised.
- Supporting paperwork or evidence if relevant must be provided at the same time to enable the school to consider the request fairly.
- The school's decision will be returned in writing within one week.
- Parents complete a request form obtained from the school office. The Headteacher responds to each request in writing, and a copy is kept by the school so that patterns in requests can be monitored.
- The school will consider approving a request only if there are exceptional circumstances

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Religious observance

- The absence form does not need to be used in order to take one day of absence to observe religious festivals.

Emergency absence

- Where an unforeseen event occurs for which absence from school is required and less than one week's notice can be given, an appointment should be made with the Headteacher (or in her absence, the Deputy Headteacher), and the request made in person.
- A decision will be returned within one day.
- The meeting and decision will be noted on the pupil's file.

Post-absence authorisation

- Parent or carer must inform the school of the absence by 9:30am on the first day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence. The Head has discretion to waive the requirement for daily absence reporting if particular circumstances warrant it.
- The reason for the absence and the expected return date must be given.
- A written explanation is to be provided within three days of the child's return to school.
- FAILURE to provide written explanation and supporting paperwork as required will be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body and could result in a referral to the ACE.
- Where a child is absent and the school has not been informed by 9:30am, administration staff will contact parents/carers by telephone or text message on the first day of absence. If they are concerned about the reason given for the absence, or if they are unable to reach the parent/carer, the Headteacher will be informed.

MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

- Routine medical and dental appointments must be made outside of school hours whenever possible. They are important for the child's wellbeing, but so is their education. The school reserves the right to ask parents/carers to rearrange such appointments if they are able to do so.
- Where authorised absence is requested for such an appointment, the school may ask to see written evidence of the appointment date and time.
- Details will be kept in the pupil's file.
- The school recognises that a small number of children have particular needs which will require them to have more medical appointments than simple routine ones.

SANCTIONS FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Where a child is not in school and no prior authorisation has been given, and the school has not been notified by 9:30am, an unauthorised absence will be recorded and the following sanctions will be applied:

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- The pupil will not be eligible for relevant attendance and punctuality rewards;
- The Headteacher will write to the parents/carers drawing their attention to this policy, their legal responsibilities and the possible impact of absence on their child and the school;
- The unauthorised absence will be recorded in the pupil's file;
- In the case of persistent unauthorised absence, the Chair of Governors and the ACE may be informed. The Chair at their discretion may also write to parents/carers. Referral to the ACE could result in the issue of a penalty notice, a fine, and a criminal record for the parent or carer.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Where the school is concerned about frequent absences, patterns of absence or frequent lateness, a referral to Early Help will be offered to parents or carers. Early Help will work constructively with parents to identify reasons for absence or lateness, and support in putting routines or incentives in place at home to improve. A referral to the school nurse may also be made, to work with parents on making decisions over whether a child can attend school or not. Parents' agreement to these referrals is always sought before a referral is made.

Holidays and travel during term time

Holidays during term time will not be authorised. This includes travel to see family.

Management of Punctuality

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9:05am will be considered late.
- Pupils arriving after this time must report to the school office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 11am will be recorded as officially absent for the morning session. Their parent/carer will therefore need to follow the process outlined above for authorised absence. Failure to do so will be considered as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents/carers of pupils who are repeatedly late receive a further letter from the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors will be informed. If two letters are sent and no improvement is seen, the Headteacher will meet with the parents/carers, to discuss ways to support the family in improving punctuality. Places at Breakfast Club can be prioritised for families where this will assist parents/carers.

Reporting to parents and carers

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness is reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year, with the child's report.

Rewards

The school uses a variety of rewards to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality. Currently, the school uses an “In it to Win it” reward scheme in assembly, a governors’ termly award for the class with the best attendance, and half-termly certificates to celebrate excellent attendance (100%) and very good attendance (96%+) within that half term period. Improved attendance is also celebrated. Rewards are frequently reviewed for effectiveness and adapted where necessary.

Roles and responsibilities

PARENTS AND CARERS

- To ensure that their children are present and punctual at each session of school unless one of the above exceptional circumstances apply.
- To inform the school of the reasons for any absence in the timeframes specified above.

GOVERNORS

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance, including anonymised monthly data where they deem it necessary.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- To support the Headteacher in the implementation of the policy.
- To provide advice to the Headteacher regarding authorisation for absence where required.

To consider writing to parents/carers where regular poor punctuality or unauthorised absence is drawn to their attention by the Head.

HEADTEACHER

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to monitor individual and whole school attendance and punctuality accurately.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child’s attendance or punctuality, and offer support through the Early Help team where this is appropriate.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To consider applications for exceptional leave, and communicate decisions regarding this with parents/carers.
- To make a judgement whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised, taking into account statutory guidance.

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CLASS TEACHERS

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class using SIMS electronic registers.
- To organise learning to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

ADMINISTRATION STAFF

- To record the reasons for absence given to them in SIMS.
- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS attendance manager system.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To prepare letters to parents/carers where attendance/punctuality is causing concern, in conjunction with the Headteacher.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason. In the case of vulnerable children, parents/carers are contacted by 9:30am.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To record, after consultation with the Headteacher, whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

EARLY HELP

- To work constructively with parents to avoid unnecessary absence and establish routines which enable punctuality.

ACE

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.

Administration

The school uses SIMS Attendance Manager to store and monitor data to carry out its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

Registers are legal documents and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. This is done electronically. On occasions when there are technological problems, the administration staff provide teachers with a paper register.

Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

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Attendance codes

The following codes are used to indicate the reason for absence:

L – late (between 9:05 am and 9:30 am)

U – late (after 9:30 am – unauthorised absence)

M – medical – hospital admission, dental, optician, doctor appointment

Other authorised absence – general illness, bereavement, family reasons

H – authorised holiday absence

G – unauthorised holiday absence

Monitoring and evaluation

Attendance data is collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This includes children with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of unauthorised absence; all children with attendance below 90% (persistent absentees); children with falling attendance.

The school aims to achieve at least national attendance levels annually.

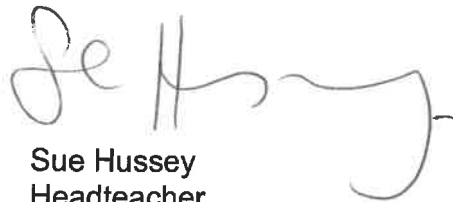
Date adopted by the Governing Body: 8.2.17

Review date: February 2020

Signed:



Sean Doherty
Chair of Governors



Sue Hussey
Headteacher