

All Saints CEVA Primary School



'A school family learning and growing together with Jesus Christ.'

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.'

Proverbs 4:13

This policy has been written with reference to 'School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice' DFE Aug 2020.

Overall Aims:

- We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.
- West Northamptonshire County Council target for attendance is 95% or above.
- We are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.
- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- We expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved (97% or above), through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, by being in school every day possible, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance of individuals and groups.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies and parents in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with West Northamptonshire County Council policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with West Northamptonshire County Council policies and procedures.

Deputy Head Teacher:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the Office Manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education and Improvement Partnership Team (EIPT) and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Office Manager:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data.
- To check the school answer phone, office email and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence and update SIMS accordingly.
- To promptly inform the DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality by 10:30am daily.
- To produce termly data for DHT to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To write to parents/carers following 6 instances of lateness in a seasonal term or attendance below 95%.
- To maintain attendance records in line with this policy.
- To maintain clear communication with DHT regarding attendance and punctuality within year groups.
- To liaise with the DHT to discuss each case of low attendance/poor punctuality and to take full consideration of any mitigating circumstances and suggest appropriate next steps which align with the school's Christian values.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support DHT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school about absence.
- To follow Local Authority procedures for children missing in education (CME) or home schooled.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate, timely and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the school's register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's register system at 9:00 am and 1.00 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If and when required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- When required to work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Office Manager, of pupils who persist with poor attendance or punctuality.
- To feed back to parents the impact of pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings and in school reports as relevant.

Parents:

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on attendance and therefore learning.

Where absence is unavoidable:

- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school by 8:45am on each day of absence. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.
- If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.
- Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception, by the Office Manager. Absence mark on school's register system amended to a late mark by Office Manager
- Parents provide confirmation of reasons for a child/ren absence including dates of and reason for absence upon the child's return to school.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aim:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%), it is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across the school.

School Newsletters/ParentMail

The school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

Breakfast Club

A school funded daily Breakfast Club takes place every day for identified families. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.15 am, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of staff. Places are limited and approaches about this should be made to the Deputy Headteacher. Oscars (private wrap around care) is also available for those parents needing before/after school care.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

- It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes.
- Good class attendance can be linked to good teaching and this is celebrated.
- End of Term Attendance Rewards/certificates.
- At the end of each seasonal term there is a special certificate for children who have achieved attendance at 100%. The DHT and the Office Manager organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives.

Attendance Certificates

Children with 100% attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Head Teacher to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each seasonal term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance and for the year as a whole.

Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a regular basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% - 100% attendance is shared in termly assemblies.

This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Parent/teacher consultation evenings & Child's annual school report

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the DHT. The impact of poor attendance should be written in the child's annual report.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using the schools' electronic systems (SIMS). The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

Morning Register

Children to be in class for registration at 8.50am. Any child arriving after the close of register at 9.00am will have a "late" mark recorded. If a child arrives after 9.20am it will be recorded as "late/absent" and will count as an unauthorised absence.

The Office Manager checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The Office Manager then begins first day absence calls.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Punctuality

The Office Manager and the DHT monitor punctuality regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents may be invited in to school to discuss the concerns with the DHT and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the EIPT who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

See also Pupil Premium Strategy for attendance too

IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Office Manager follows this system by 10:30am on the first day of absence:

1. Phone parents' contact number(s).
2. Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
3. Send a text and Parent mail to any parent that has not been able to be contacted
 - If contact is made the parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school.
 - The Office Manager must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the Office Manager has not been able to contact parents a letter is sent to the parents about this and the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).
4. Inform HT/DHT if anyone has not been contacted so that the safeguarding mobile can be used to try and make contact.
5. HT/DHT to undertake a home visit by 12 noon on the first day of absence if no contact has been made.
 - If no one present a compliment slip posted through letterbox informing parent to contact school urgently.
6. If no contact still received by 2pm despite the above, then police may be called to request a welfare check or MASH contacted for further advice.

Attendance Meetings

The Office Manager/DHT monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and Pupil Premium pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

Extended Holidays

In line with the 2016 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil

- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required).

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The school family can provide a caring, safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If leave is granted in “exceptional circumstances” it should not exceed 10 school days and should not be taken during important assessments/school events. It is expected that any work missed should be made up by taking assignments with him/her or completing them on the child’s return.

The Governors of the school do not authorise holidays taken during school term time. The term dates are published a year in advance on the Northamptonshire County Council website, www.northamptonshire.gov.uk and are also available on the school’s website.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher’s authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Northamptonshire County Council position as of March 2022 is made clear on their web site: *‘Penalty notices for term time absence - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.’* Available at:

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/penalty-notices-for-non-school-attendance.aspx>

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

- Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.
- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

- “If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.”
- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.
- These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Date agreed by the Governing Body: April 2022

Policy to be reviewed in: April 2023