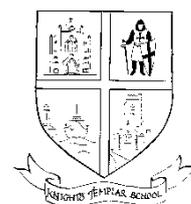


KNIGHTS TEMPLAR CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND METHODIST COMMUNITY FIRST SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Introduction:

As a church school, we believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect, with equality of opportunity and positive attitudes. We strive to create a stimulating environment where everyone's spiritual and moral beliefs are nurtured. In approving this agreement, the governors have considered their responsibilities to achieve these aims and the School's Christian foundation.

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly. We have noted that children who are not making expected progress in their learning are often those who have poor attendance or those who frequently start the day at a disadvantage due to being late in. A punctual start to the day means that the child has a chance to see their friends in an informal way, find out from the teacher what is happening during the day and to feel confident about the learning expectations.

Aims

We aim to encourage all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality by:

- developing supportive strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and minimising unauthorised absences;
- raising pupil, parent and staff awareness of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality;
- using attendance data to show the status and trends of individuals, families, classes, and the whole school where appropriate;
- offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality;
- setting targets for attendance annually with particular regard to the minimising of unauthorised absences

1 School Attendance and the Law

1.1 Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

1.2 The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carers, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

1.4 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, (amended 2013) headteachers **may not grant any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family may apply for a leave of absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances which warrant it. Only one such absence may be allowed each year.

1.5 any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000

2. Leave of Absence

2.1 Applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance in accordance with school procedures. Parents are asked to complete the appropriate form requesting time out of school. This may be for a medical appointment or it may be for holiday time.

2.2 Exceptional circumstances may be where a family needs to spend time together to support each other in a crisis. This may include;

- An immediate family member is terminally/critically ill
- Following a bereavement of a close family member
- Families who have been through a recent traumatic or acrimonious divorce
- Families where the circumstances are known to the school and where it may be very beneficial for them to take time out together.

In addition the following may be deemed exceptional:

- Service personnel where a parent/carer has just returned from a tour of duty and needs time with the family
- Where parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. letter from employer) that they are restricted to annual leave within the school term. (Self-employed parents should not request holiday during term time. Holidays booked by grandparents, or to celebrate family birthdays will not be authorised.)

2.3 If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the case being referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

2.4 If parents wish to request leave of absence to enable their child to attend a funeral, wedding or religious celebration a *Request for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances* form should be filled in and submitted to the Headteacher as soon as possible before the event.

2.5 Travellers who are travelling to trade for a period of 5 or more days must inform the school before they travel. In this case the absence may be authorised and the school place held open until their return. In other cases absence of travellers will be treated in the same way as all other pupils and may well be unauthorised.

3. Roles and Responsibilities in promoting attendance

3.1 Headteacher or Member of the Senior Leadership Team :

- Expects pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Will consider all circumstances when deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised to ensure safeguarding of the pupils.
- Will make appropriate referrals to appropriate agencies to safeguard the welfare of the child.
- Report to governors on strategies employed and future action to be implemented to raise attendance.
- Provide an analysis of the attendance data to the governing body .
- Will call an attendance meeting with parents/carers when concerns are raised over a child's attendance to discuss barriers to attendance and set targets to achieve. These will be monitored and a decision will be taken about the next steps.

Attendance & Punctuality policy February 2017

- Will hold a further attendance meeting with parents together with the attendance officer if the attendance has not improved following the first meeting
- Will make appropriate referrals to other agencies if it is identified that the child has additional needs that professionals can assist in.
- Will liaise with the parents to negotiate a suitable phased return to school where a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period through illness or medical treatment.

3.2 Admin staff

- Will monitor the completion of all class registers on SIMS
- Will log and provide reports both verbal and written to the headteacher
- Any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality regardless of the absence being authorised or unauthorised will be reported to headteacher and class teacher
- Will send letters to parents and carers when attendance is causing concern

In partnership with the class teacher and headteacher, will encourage good attendance.

- Will use correct codes for absences as set out in statute.
- Will investigate all absenteeism to ensure safeguarding of the child.
- Will carry out daily telephone calls/texts to parents/carers when a child is absent and no reasons have been provided by 9.30 am to confirm that they are aware of their child's absence and to seek a reason.
- Will log the reason for the absence on SIMS each day

3.3 Pupils

- Are expected to attend regularly and punctually for registration at 8.50am and lessons
- Who arrive late should go to the office to inform the school they have arrived and receive a late token.

3.4 Class teacher

- Will accurately mark the register using SIMS and will submit it punctually
- Will use correct codes for attendance/absence as set out in statute
- The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education Regulations 2006, take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session.

3.5 Other members of staff

It is the responsibility of all who work in the school to report any attendance and/or safeguarding concerns to the headteacher for investigation.

3.6 Parents/ Carers

- Should not normally take their children out of school in term time and **have no legal right to do so.**
- Will ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually, appropriately dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Will inform the school of the reason for any absence on the first day of absence and confirm the expected date of return.
- Will ensure the school has up to date emergency contact details.
- Will keep the school informed of any barriers to their children attending regularly.
- Will ring the school **by 9am on the first day of absence** for illness
- On the child's return to school after illness, a letter should be written explaining the circumstances. This should be given to the child's teacher to put in the pouch.
- Will provide the school with appropriate medical evidence where a) the child has been absent for more than 5 consecutive days and/or b) where the parent has previously been requested to do so for any absence as a result of previous poor attendance
- Will seek the authorisation of the Headteacher before the holiday is booked if exceptional circumstances arise leading to a request for a leave of absence during school time by meeting with the Headteacher and them completing a holiday form.
- Are expected to work with school to resolve any attendance issues with their child.

3.7 Educational Welfare Service

- Will advise the Headteacher and/ or governors as necessary on attendance issues.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance.
- The school will refer a pupil to Education Attendance Officer where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. If attendance fails to improve, the school will support the LA in taking appropriate legal action against parents/carers. This could include the use of Penalty Notices and prosecutions.

4 Registration and absence procedures

Registration Procedures

- Pupils leaving the school during the day must report to the office to be signed out.
- Pupils returning during the school day must report to the school office to be signed in.
- If a class is on an all day trip the register must be completed for both the morning and afternoon sessions, coding as appropriate to the activity attended.
- A register is a legal document and must be completed accurately. This is also really important in the event of an emergency, such as a fire.
- Class teachers will mark on a laminated register each day only those children who are absent. This will act as the fire register in the event of a fire or fire drill.

Absence Authorisation

Under the Education Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents or carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the headteacher may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

First day absence procedure

The class teacher identifies that a child is not in school.

If no reason has been given or contact received from the parents/carers, the admin staff will telephone/text the child's parent/carer to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home.

If the first day contact telephone call has been unsuccessful:

- the office will contact all emergency contacts listed on the child's file until the child is located or a parent/carer contacted
- a member of staff may visit the home to check on the child's whereabouts
- the office will continue to make calls until contact is made or the child returns to school
- if necessary, the Attendance Officer will initiate Child Missing Education procedures

Reward system

- 100% attendance is rewarded termly and whole school yearly with awards to pupils and parents
- Pupils may also be rewarded when significant improvements in reaching attendance targets are met.
- Reward systems are regularly reviewed and adjusted to incorporate good practice

Re-integration

Pupils who are returning to school after a period of absence will be afforded special provision under the school's reintegration process.

The reintegration process may include any of the following:

- Parent meeting with the class teacher where appropriate
- Opportunities and help to catch up on missed work.
- Friendship groups or buddy systems being established.
- Enhanced monitoring targeted intervention where appropriate

5 Monitoring and review

Attendance Targets

An annual attendance target is set by governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.

Governing body

- The attendance data for the whole school will be presented to the Governing Body termly.
- The school attendance targets will be reviewed and agreed.
- The Headteacher will report to governors on strategies employed and future action to be implemented in the school to raise attendance.
- When targets are not met, headteacher provide an analysis of the reasons why.
- Pupils' attention is targeted and drawn to the need to attend school every day in assemblies.

It is the responsibility of our Governing body to approve, adopt and then monitor the implementation of this policy and to evaluate levels of attendance and the impact of strategies. This is carried out by the governor with responsibility for attendance and reported to meetings of the Full Governing Body through the Headteacher's Report to Governors.

Signed Date