



All Saints C of E  
Infant and Nursery School

Selston C of E  
Infant and Nursery School

# Attendance Policy

September 2021

*Opening hearts and minds through the  
grace and love of God*

# **ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) INFANT SCHOOL AND PRE-SCHOOL**

## **SELSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*Opening hearts and minds through the grace and love of God*

At All Saints Infant School and Pre-School and Selston Infant and Nursery School children always come first and we try to nourish, challenge, prepare and inspire them within a Christian ethos.

We believe in valuing all who contribute towards the successful running of our schools including children, parents, carers, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff.

This Mission Statement lies at the heart of our schools' aims. It is the philosophical basis for all of the schools' policies and through these, for everything that happens in and round our schools. Our aspiration is for everyone at All Saints and Selston to:

- feel happy, secure, safe and valued at school
- develop a growing awareness of their own inner self and spirituality, and of the power of the Christian faith to transform lives
- develop healthy relationships based on care, trust, compassion and forgiveness
- show acceptance for and understanding of others who may have different beliefs or needs
- strive for the highest standards of achievement, developing the confidence and skills to be independent, motivated and self-disciplined learners
- have a positive approach to life, contributing to the well-being of the community and building hope for the future

We hope that children will leave our schools with open hearts and minds, ready to respond to the opportunities that lie before them and to experience the joy of life in all its fullness.

## **Aims of this Policy:**

- ✓ To increase levels of attendance throughout the school.
- ✓ To continue to improve punctuality.
- ✓ To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- ✓ To provide support advice and guidance to pupils and parents.
- ✓ To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- ✓ To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- ✓ To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- ✓ To promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality amongst pupils and their families.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence).
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence).

If a child is absent, parents should call the school on each day of the absence giving a reason. A note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. The school will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence. If authorisation is refused, for instance if a child is kept off school for a birthday, then the parents will be informed. A note, telephone call or personal explanation is essential for authorisation of absence.

## **Legal Requirements**

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education. The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the LA. This responsibility is delegated to the Enforcement Lead.

Legal action will be instigated against parents / carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- penalty notices;
- Section 444(1) and (1) (a) of the Education Act 2002.

## **Working with Schools**

The Family Service will work with and support all schools to improve the level of attendance. This will be done by providing:

- written guidance and advice on the Schools' Portal, the County Council's intranet site;
- examples of regularly updated good practice on the Schools' Portal and via the DfE website;
- information on the Schools' Portal about the range of strategies that can be used;
- checking of attendance registers and computerised attendance databases;
- monitoring of attendance data;

- annual review of statutory absence targets;
- collaboration with other LA and voluntary organisations to promote improved engagement and attendance of pupils;
- a range of courses and events aimed at improving schools' response to attendance.

Support for LA maintained primary schools will be delivered by the Behaviour and Attendance Service.

### **Working with Parents / Carers**

The role of parents/carers is crucial in ensuring that children achieve a high level of attendance. Our Head of School will support parents/carers to fulfil their role and will encourage close liaison with school.

### **Working with other Agencies**

Poor school attendance can be both a symptom of other difficulties faced by a pupil and their family, and a cause of other problems including exclusion and involvement in criminal activity. A coordinated approach on a multi-agency basis is required to support these children and families.

The Head of School will facilitate meetings to share information and concerns. Within a coordinated approach, support, guidance and clarity will be given to deal with issues related to school attendance.

### **Acceptable reasons for absence:**

- Illness;
- Illness with a risk to others (infection);
- A death in the immediate family;
- Medical and dental appointments which cannot be made out of school time (mark with an M);
- Special agreed tuition outside school (mark with a B);
- Or other reason as agreed with the school.

### **Unacceptable reasons for absence;**

- Truancy;
- Minding the house;
- Illness of siblings;
- Shopping;
- Birthdays;
- To help with the family business or housework;
- School uniform in the wash;
- Looking after relatives;
- Over sleeping;
- Visiting friends or relatives.

If an explanation of the child's absence is not provided by parents / carers, then the school will contact the home by telephone on the first day of absence, following this with a letter if there is a prolonged absence. **This contact needs to be recorded in the register by**

**the class teacher.** Any child whose attendance is a cause for concern may be targeted to ascertain whether particular patterns of non-attendance are observed. These target child's attendance will be closely monitored and any absence challenged. At this point, daily communication with parents / carers will be made if the child is absent. If an improvement in attendance is not forthcoming, a referral will be made to the Behaviour and Attendance Service. School administration systems will also pursue all unauthorised absences to ascertain reasons for absence and will then follow any agreed procedures depending upon the outcome. All medical / dental appointments should also be arranged out of school hours if at all possible.

Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the school with a certificate at an assembly in July. Specific prizes will also be presented to a child who has achieved 100% (with no unauthorised absence) attendance.

Class and school targets will be set throughout the school year for attendance. These will be rewarded on a class or individual basis during Celebration Worship. Children who improve their attendance will also be rewarded.

The Attendance Policy will also be distributed to parents on an annual basis via the school website.

### **Completing the Register**

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They may also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are required to be marked in ink and not easily erased, and all alterations should be visible and explained.

- Red diagonal line to denote presence;
- Black circle with an I, H, M or B to denote authorised absence (or other agreed code); L for lateness (see also appendix 3);
- No tippex;
- Weekly/termly headings completed;
- Daily and weekly attendance figures completed;
- Maintain running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence.

### **Monitoring Process**

The Head of School and Office Manager will monitor attendance and lateness on a weekly and half termly basis, establishing any patterns of absence and targeting specific children. Contact will be made by the school to parents / carers whose children's attendance is of concern each half term. This may be by letter or telephone. If the child's attendance does not improve then a referral will be made to the Enforcement Lead to issue a penalty notice. If any member of staff is concerned with a particular child's attendance then their concerns should be noted to the Head of School who will take the appropriate action.

Full reports for each class and for the whole school will be issued to all teachers and

governors. Spot checks of registers will be carried out by the Head of School. An electronic record of all pupils' attendance will be kept by the school in the school office.

Each year the annual absence target for reducing absence for each school will be reviewed, and where necessary revised, to ensure that school continue to improve the level of attendance.

### **Family Holidays during Term Time**

Government legislation does not allow parents to take family holidays during term time and we cannot authorise any such absences.

If the school has evidence that a parent / carer has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is above 6 sessions / 3 days in total then the school can issue or request the Local Authority to issue an Educational Penalty Notices to the parents. (NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ISSUING FINES FOR PUPIL ABSENCES July 2015).

*“An unauthorised leave of absence of more than 3 days / 6 school sessions for the purpose of a family holiday can lead to you being issued with a penalty notice of up to £120.00 for each child who is absent. The fines can be issued to both parents for each child.”*

If you wish to request leave of absence during term-time, you must speak to the Head of School or the Executive Head teacher before making any booking.

If children are taken out of school during term time the absence will be marked as unauthorised in the attendance register. The Head of School and Executive Head teacher may now only grant leave in exceptional circumstances which would include:

- Religious purposes;
- Family funeral/bereavement;
- Specific visits to a parent absent from the family home.

Applications may be made for such cases and each request will be considered individually. (See Appendix 1).

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for subsequent lessons after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which must be avoided.

### **Lateness**

School begins at 8.40 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at 8.50. Any child arriving later than 9.00 a.m. should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

Any child arriving once the register has been taken is officially late and an 'L' will be placed

in the register. Any child arriving significantly late will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken.

### **What can parents do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is away;
- Send a note when their child returns to school;
- Try to make appointments outside school time;
- Do not allow their child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

Parents / carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Family Service based in the LA. They will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Early Help Unit themselves to ask for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the LA.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and school needs parents / carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

All absence is thoroughly monitored. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistence absence (PA) mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately. All PA pupils and their parents / carers are subject to an action plan and are also automatically made known to the Attendance Officer.

### **If parents / carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they can:**

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple;
- Talk to the Head of school, Family Support Worker and staff at the school.

### **If it continues:**

- Parents / carers may contact the Education Welfare Service, who will work with them and the school to resolve the situation. (Number available from the School Office).

## **Children Missing in Education:**

Children can register in the morning and then go missing throughout the day without a satisfactory explanation. If a child is 'missing', their whereabouts cannot be established within the school. The school will need to identify whether the child is at significant risk.

Children are more vulnerable who:

- are on a plan (child protection plan, child in need plan, looked after child, early help);
- have specialist educational needs and/or a disability;
- are using substances;
- have an education health care plan;
- there are indications that the child is at risk of CSE, grooming, radicalisation, etc.

There may be other contributing factors that should be taken into consideration when determining if the child is at significant risk such as the child's emotional health, known issues at home, etc.

School staff will always try to locate the child and attempt to establish the whereabouts of the child. Once a child has been identified as missing and cannot be located within school, the designated safeguarding lead will be informed.

Staff will use their professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the child's whereabouts before notifying the police. Parents / carers will always be informed before contact with the police is made, unless a child is at immediate risk of harm and a police response is needed. This will be judged on a case by case basis.

When a decision has been made to contact the police, the police will require information from the school to assist in locating the child and returning them to a safe environment. If a child has a social worker or case manager (e.g, early help) then they should also be informed.

Where a child is known to regularly go missing from school, a risk assessment for the child will be undertaken.

For further guidance please see the missing protocol or speak to Nottinghamshire County Council's Glen Scruby, Children's Missing Officer.  
Missing.CME@nottsccl.gov.uk / 0115 8041045

## Appendix 1

### APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:-

Date of **Last** day at School \_\_\_\_ Date of **Return** to School \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of school days missed** \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for absence from school:

---

---

---

---

*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent / Carer making application \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL  
GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**

#### **Staff Use Only**

- Unauthorised absence letter sent
- Entered into Register and Dinner Register