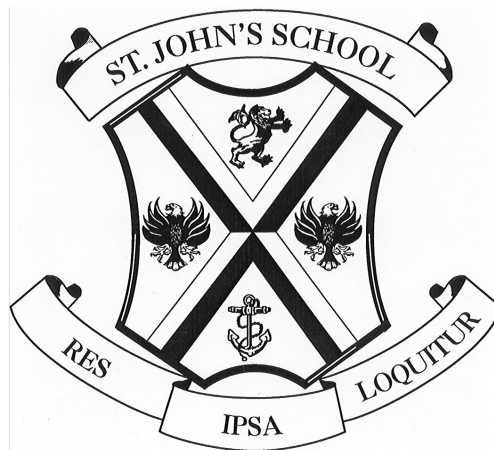


# St. John's Prep. & Senior School



## Attendance Policy

<b>Last reviewed by the leadership team</b>	<b>Last reviewed by the advisory board</b>
March 2018	November 2018

## **Attendance & Truancy Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1** At St. John's Prep. and Senior School, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, at St. John's we place great emphasis on this in our communication with parents. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.
- 1.2** Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Prospectus – see School Regulations attachment. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason. Parents/guardians of children of compulsory school age must ensure that their children receive an efficient and full time education, either at school or otherwise.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.

- 1.3** The school is responsible for making sure an attendance register is kept that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Authorised and Unauthorised absences are explained to parents. At both Schools, attendance is recorded daily on Behaviour Watch and checked for accuracy on a weekly basis and for persistent absences, half termly.
- 1.4** *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.* Amendments to the 2006 regulations, which came into force from September 2013, remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

## 2 Definitions

Absence will be categorised as follows:

2.1 **Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carers informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parent/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

2.2 **Medical/Dental Appointments:** Parent/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to school.

2.3 **Other Authorised Circumstances:** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent/carer in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

2.4 **Excluded (No alternative provision made):** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

2.5 **Family Holidays and Extended Leave:** Parent/carers do not have the right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday.

### 2.6 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### 2.7 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 3. Aims and objectives

3.1 Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

- maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
- ensure that pupils are safe and that their whereabouts are known;

- eliminate unauthorised absence;
- ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
- ensure that school staff and parents and carers are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness;
- ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance;
- make clear to parents and carers the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;
- ensure that children enjoy coming to school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and consistently.

#### **4 Procedure if a child is absent ('same day' calling and follow-up)**

- 4.1** When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and check with the school office, to see if any telephone messages have been received. If no message has been received, the class / Form teacher (or the secretary) will contact the parents to ascertain why the child is not in school. If it is not possible to contact the parent or guardian a second attempt will be made. If there is still no answer, a call will be made to one of the people on the child's emergency contact list. A home visit is a last resort and will be undertaken if no contact can be made. If necessary, contact will be made with social care services and/or the police.
- 4.2** When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. If the absence lasts longer than 3 days, then a Doctor's Certificate may be requested.
- 4.3** A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example, if a child has a medical appointment.

#### **5 Requests for leave of absence**

- 5.1** We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children, which means they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this. Again at this initial meeting parents are asked to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The Head Teacher talks to those parents who have, in the past, persistently taken their holidays in term time, reminding them of the disruption to their child's education and the fact that 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' has now been amended (2016) and Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### **6 Long-term absence**

- 6.1** When children have an illness that means they will be away from school, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

## **7 Repeated absences**

- 7.1** If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class / form teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern on Behaviour Watch. If there is an urgent concern then the class teacher talks to a senior leader immediately.

## **8 Rewards for good attendance**

- 8.1** At the Prep school, all the children who have 100 per cent attendance over the academic year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the year.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of the headteachers to monitor overall attendance. The attendance register is looked at regularly, patterns of absence worked out and if necessary, the Educational Welfare Officer for the school is contacted. Contact may be made by phoning if the situation needs discussing before a visit, or by filling in EWS 1 form which shows the patterns of absences and lates.
- 9.2** All the staff at St. John's Prep. & Senior School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, as only a few senior children come to school by public transport, if there should ever be a concern that a child might be truanting then action would be taken straight away by the Headteacher who would contact the parents and, if necessary, the Educational Welfare Officer.
- 9.3** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.4** Class / Form teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Headteacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.