

# The Federation of St John's & St Paul's Whitechapel CE Primary Schools

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Aims

The federation attendance target is 97%.

We believe that good attendance plays an essential part in pupils' social and emotional development and academic attainment. Attending school punctually and regularly allows pupils to participate fully in the school community and builds the discipline necessary for a good transition to secondary school and the increasing independence of young adulthood.

We have clear systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality and where problems and patterns are identified we believe in providing early support to ensure that difficulties are dealt with before they escalate.

We work in partnership with all children's services to ensure that all of our pupils are enabled to achieve punctual, regular school attendance.

We will apply the Attendance Policy rigorously and consistently to build an environment where good attendance and punctuality is an expectation of all members of the school community.

### School Attendance Procedures (see Appendix 1: Extended Leave Flowchart)

Registers are monitored by the schools' administration team, who will also keep a record of first day of absence communication from the parent/ carer. The administration team will make initial contact with the parent/ carer to follow up a child's unexplained absence.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality is monitored weekly; any concerns are referred to the Attendance Team. Attendance Team meetings will be held every half-term to monitor all attendance rates, absences and poor punctuality that are causing concern.

The School Attendance Teams are:

St John's:	D Rubin, K Darby, L Potten
St Paul's Whitechapel:	T Bennett, F Mannan, N Dunn

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% in a twelve month period or where their attendance or punctuality causes a concern, the parents/ carers will receive a letter to inform them of the concerns and asking them to attend invite them to an in-school Attendance Panel. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the particular issues and agree actions to improve the attendance.

Where, after 5 weeks, there is no improvement in attendance and/ or punctuality following the above interventions, a **penalty notice warning** may be issued.

**If, after a further 5 weeks, there is no improvement in attendance and/ or punctuality following the above interventions, a Penalty Notice may be issued.**

### Authorised Absence

When a pupil is unable to attend school through illness parents/ carers have a duty to inform the school by phone or in person on the first day of absence and to give reasons for their child's absence.

An absence can only be authorised by the headteacher when an acceptable reason is received, supported by evidence as appropriate – for example, a medical certificate in the case of absence due to illness.

Where parents/ carers have not informed the school of their child's absence, the school will phone on the first day of absence. If no contact is made, a text will be sent and subsequently a 'Reason for absence' letter will be sent home to remind parents/ carers of their responsibilities to inform the school and give a reason for their child's absence.

In line with local authority (LA) policy, parents of children who are absent from school should only be asked to provide medical evidence if advised to do so by the LA attendance & welfare adviser (AWA).

**Family Illness:** Where one child in a family is ill, parents are expected to bring any other sibling(s) to school as usual. Where a parent is ill, children are expected to be in school. Parents are requested to make alternative arrangements to ensure their child's attendance.

**Known Medical Cases:** Children with on-going health issues that we know of or short-term acute illness such as chickenpox may be exempt from the follow-up procedures and dealt with on an individual basis at the discretion of the Attendance Team.

**Head lice:** Parents who detect head lice on their children should contact the school for advice. Parents are expected to treat their children's hair outside school hours.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is considered as 'truancy' by the LA.

If parents/ carers fail to give a reason or proof of illness within a week of the pupil's return to school, the pupil's absence will be marked as 'Unauthorised'.

### **Extended Leave** (see Appendix 2: Extended Leave Flowchart)

We do not authorize **any** holiday in term time. In line with London Borough of Tower Hamlets policy, parents requesting leave during term-time will be informed that they need to make a request in writing and will be given a copy of the Tower Hamlets leaflet 'Information for Parents and Carers – Penalty Notices to address Poor Attendance at School'. Where possible, the school will meet parents before they take leave or, if necessary, afterwards, to confirm school policy.

When extended leave is taken, e.g. for a holiday, **a Penalty Notice may be issued**. Consideration may be given to families if:

The child has a 96% or above attendance record over the previous 12 months and,  
the child is not in a statutory test year (Year 6 or Year 2) and,  
no more than five days' holiday is taken, and  
the child is not a child in need (CiN) or on a Child Protection plan.

After 21 consecutive school days' leave, pupils may be removed from the school roll.

### **Lateness**

School begins at 9:00 a.m. Pupils are admitted to school at 8.50 a.m. and should be in their class to be registered by their class teacher by 9:10 a.m.

Where pupils arrive after 9:00 a.m. they must sign in to the late book in the school office, and give a reason. Lateness is monitored by the Attendance Team and followed up as necessary. A text is sent out at the end of the week to parents/ carers whose children have been late more than once during that week. Persistent lateness will result in a referral to the AWA.

If a pupil is to arrive at school after 10 a.m. parents/ carers must phone the school before 10:00 a.m. to order a school lunch, otherwise they will be expected to provide their child with a packed lunch.

### **Penalty Notices**

Parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice in a variety of situations, including:

**Where a pupil has had fifteen authorised days' absences from school, with no medical record provided, in a five week period.**

**Where a pupil has had five unauthorised absences from school within five weeks (or three consecutive days').**

**Where parents fail to attend an In-School Attendance Panel, without reasonable cause.**

**Where a pupil has been late fifteen times within a five week period.**

### **Children Missing From School**

In cases where the school is unable to make contact with parents about a child's absence, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed and will make a decision about reporting

the child to the LA as missing from education.

Where a parent notifies the school that their child has left the school, we will inform the LA and keep the child on our roll until receiving confirmation from the child's new school that they have attended.

The school will notify the LA of any pupils who have been removed from the school roll, including those who are home-schooled.

### **Registration**

Registers are kept in accordance with the guidelines issued in the LA's circular 3.99, the Marking and Maintenance of Registers.

Teachers complete their class register twice a day, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. This is a legal requirement.

### **School's Responsibilities**

- To follow up all unexplained, unauthorised and patterns of absence with parents, and refer to other agencies where appropriate.
- To provide advice and support for any family experiencing difficulties.
- To publish attendance percentage statistics for each class in the newsletter.

### **Governors' Responsibilities**

- To oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- To analyse attendance and punctuality figures in terms of the implementation of the policy.

### **Parents'/ Carers' Responsibilities**

- To send their child to school regularly and punctually.
- To inform the school at the start of the first day of their child's absence with the reasons and keep the school informed on subsequent days, as appropriate.
- To attend meetings when requested to discuss attendance/ punctuality issues.
- To make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours, where possible.
- To produce an appointment card/ letter if an appointment has to be made during school hours.

### **Pupils' Responsibilities**

- To attend school regularly and punctually.
- To let an adult know of any problems that may affect their motivation to attend school.

### **Rewards and Incentives**

- An Attendance Cup is awarded in the Celebration assembly to the class with the highest attendance of the week.
- Attendance certificates are awarded in assembly at the end of each term for 100% attendance.
- Pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the year are given a special reward at the end of the year.

Please also refer to:

Federation supporting pupils with medical needs policy

Federation Equal opportunities policy

<b>File name</b>	Federation Attendance Policy 2018
<b>Date of latest revision</b>	December 2018
<b>Date Ratified by Governors</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
<b>Date of Review</b>	Spring 2019