

# St. John the Baptist RC Primary School



## Attendance Policy

St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School Milton Lane Dartmouth TQ6 9HW Tel: 01803 832495			
Approved Date	Headteacher Signature	Chair of Governors Signature	Review Date
November 2021	LH		
Spring term 22	LH		Spring term 24

## Aim of the Policy

To enable each child to reach their full potential, St John the Baptist School stresses the importance to both children and parents / carers of the need for maximum attendance and punctuality. Children do well in school if they have good attendance and arrive on time. This sets positive patterns for life.

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, by regular attendance at school. Teachers are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At St John the Baptist RC School, attendance is recorded twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils need to be in school by 8.45am. Registers are taken between 8.45-9.00am. Pupils that arrive after this time will be marked late. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked absent. This may be unauthorised. The school day ends at 3.15pm.

## Rights and Responsibilities

We

- expect pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.
- will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absences.
- will require that staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- will work closely with parents / carers should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

Pupils:

- will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.
- will have individual records of attendance / punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Parents / Carers:

- are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- are responsible for informing the school as early as possible of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit).

- are required to complete an Absence Request Form (S2) and obtain authorisation before a planned absence. Authorisation of holidays within term time is not automatic.
- can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance.

### Authorising Absence

All absences (except those for which prior approval has been granted) must be explained by a message left at the school on the day of absence before 9.00am at the School Office, with a parental note on return to school. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents / carers. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorized absence and take speedy action if this is suspected.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional and unavoidable circumstances such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- Any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents (an exception to this might be where a child is looking after a disabled parent)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

### The Educational Welfare Service (EWS)

The EWS aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full-time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help

and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

What happens if a child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?

The 1996 Education Act places a legal responsibility upon parents/carers to ensure that their child fully attends the school at which they are registered. This means that a child must attend school every day and on time (unless parents/carers can prove that the absence was with the authorisation of the school or that it was unavoidable).

If a child has unauthorised absences then the school can make a request to the Local Education Authority (through the Education Welfare Service) to instigate Parental Responsibility Measures. If you have Parental Responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice. Should a Penalty Notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within the first 21 days, this increases to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.

If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then a Magistrates Summons will be issued. Also, if a Penalty Notice has already been issued within the previous 2 years then the Local Authority could proceed straight to Magistrates Summons.

Poor Attendance escalation procedure

- In cases of poor attendance, the school will initially discuss concerns with the parents
- If absence continues the school will contact parents by letter/email advising them of the concerns.
- If attendance does not improve parents/carers may then be invited into the school to discuss these attendance concerns.
- In cases of excessive absence due to medical reasons, the school may contact parents by letter advising that because of the previous high levels of absence and the failure to provide the school with satisfactory evidence

(such as GP letters of prescriptions etc.) that future absences may be unauthorised.

- Continued poor attendance will then lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service who will investigate absence and if necessary consider legal escalation.

## Holidays

The school holiday dates are published in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays and not during term time as this has a detrimental impact upon the child's education. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right. If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, a holiday form must be completed prior to the holiday. This can be obtained from the school office. The Head and/or Head of Teaching and Learning will then decide whether or not to authorise the absences on exceptional/compassionate grounds. The Local Authority advises Head teachers to only authorise absence for holidays in exceptional circumstances. As previously stated absence from school (whatever the reason) can adversely affect a child's ability to benefit fully from their educational opportunities and to keep up with programmes of study. The Head teacher/Head of Teaching and learning will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having considered:

- The child's record of attendance;
- The time of the holiday, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/ assessments.

The Governing Board has agreed that the school will not authorise any absence for holidays:

- If your child has an attendance level below 93% calculated over the previous twelve months.
- In the first two weeks of the school year (this is a crucial time when all children should be settling in to their new classroom routines and missing this time is detrimental to forming new relationships and routines in a new class)
- At any time in May before or during assessments such as SATs (this is a time when it is important that all children are in school as it is a period during which National assessments are taken by children in Y2 to 6, organized by

the Department for children, School and Families. The Y6 tests cannot be taken at any other time).

## Term Time

### Parental Request for Authorised Absence in Term Time

A parent must complete an Absence Request Form in advance of booking a holiday or other occasion which requires absence from school. This form is obtained from the school office or the school website in the Parents section. The school will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. In doing so, the school will take into account the child's age, stage of education, educational progress and the date of absence in relation to critical school times (eg internal assessment weeks) as well as the child's previous attendance and pattern of attendance, the reason for any request and the nature and frequency of any event or trip for which the absence is requested (eg whether it is a 'one off' or likely to become a regular occurrence).

### Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- Parents, carers, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.
- The school will celebrate good attendance and attendance at 100%
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the EWO.

## Equal Opportunities

We aim to offer an education and working environment appropriate to each individual pupil's needs regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexuality, disability or religious beliefs.

## Appointments

Children's appointments, where possible, should be made after the end of the school day. If this is not possible, information will be required in relation to:

- Who the appointment is with (e.g. the doctor, the dentist, the optician, the hospital)
- The length of time out of school required
- The expected time of return
- Whether or not the child will require a school meal that day

Appointment cards, where possible, should be shown at school. If parents or carers need to collect their child from school, it is important that school has been informed beforehand. Children will not be allowed to leave school during the school day if they are unaccompanied. The parent / carer or authorised adult should collect their child from the school office and it is the responsibility of office staff to ask the parent or carer to complete the sign-out book for the child.

#### Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years.