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## Attendance Policy

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St Nicholas School is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and promotes rights respecting values in all its policies



*The Governing Body of St Nicholas School formally adopted*

*this Policy on April 2022*

*It will be reviewed in April 2023 unless otherwise advised*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

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## **Statement of Intent**

St Nicholas School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Family Liaison Officer/Admin Officer is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

**Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

### **Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason e.g medical appointments, sickness, no attendance to lack of transport, and unauthorised or authorised holiday etc.

## **4. Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

## **5. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## **6. Absence Procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or WeDuc as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. This is then recorded on Sims. A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

Class Teachers and the Admin Officer monitor pupil attendance and absence at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions by completing registers. In the morning, the school starts at 8:40 and registration closes at 9:00am. Pupils are recorded as 'late' after this time. School closes to pupils at 3pm, unless they are attending clubs, and pupils should be collected at this time.

The administrator is responsible for collating 'attendance records' and notifies the head Teacher and Family Liaison Officer if there is reason for concern. Continuous non-attendance may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or Court action. At the end of the academic year, each child's attendance is analysed and the information is recorded on the annual school report.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

## **7. Parental Involvement**

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect
- Actively support the work of the school
- Call staff for help when they need it
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

When a child becomes ill at school, the parent/carer will be contacted and expected to come to school and take the child home as soon as possible. If a parent cannot be contacted, another named emergency contact person will be telephoned. Parents are responsible for providing accurate up-to-date contact details. Parents are responsible for updating the school if details change.

## **8. Attendance Register**

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon sessions. The register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances



The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- /= Present in the morning
- \= Present in the afternoon
- L= Late arrival before the register has closed
- C= Authorised absence
- E= Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H= Authorised holiday
- I=Illness
- M=Medical or dental appointments
- R=Religious Observance
- B=off-site education activity
- G=Unauthorised holiday
- O=Unauthorised absence
- U=Arrived after registration closed
- N=Reason not yet provided
- X=Not required to be in school
- T=Gypsy and Traveller Absence
- V=Educational visit or trip
- P=Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D=Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y=Exceptional circumstances
- Z=Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully if partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for relevant pupils who are absent.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **9. Attendance Officer**

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance office (Family Liaison Officer) who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parental agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff

across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

## **10. Lateness**

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The school day starts at 8:40am. Pupils should be collected from transport or from their parents and taken straight to the classroom.

Registers are marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in the classroom at this time.

The register closes at 9:05am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

After lunch, registers are marked by 1:45pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are onsite, but this will count as a late mark.

Parents must sign their child in if arriving at school after closure of registration, giving a reason for the lateness. Parents must also sign their child out of the building if taken out of school early, again a reason being given.

## **11. Term Time Leave**

At St Nicholas School, our aim is to support pupils to develop positive attitudes towards school. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed. Therefore, the Head Teacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Head teacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The Head Teacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record show any authorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence is already above 10 percent for any reason
- Previous requests will be taken into account when making such a decision.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## 12. Missing Children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Head Teacher. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Head Teacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search. A tannoy will be put out so staff are aware of a missing child.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Head Teacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The LRC
  - The Sensory Room
  - The Hall and Dining Hall
  - The stairwells
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not be found after 10 minutes, then the parents will be notified.
- If the parents have had not contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any Special Education Needs, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the child has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Head Teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

### **13. Religious Observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### **14.Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment letter will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

### **15.Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

## **16.Young carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

## **17.Monitoring and Reviewing**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2023.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## **Appendix 1: Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

St Nicholas School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard.

1. Class Teachers report concerns about absence to the Head teacher or Family Liaison Officer
2. Attendance is discussed by the Family Liaison Officer following register inspections. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these 'N' codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using N codes. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as unauthorised absence.
5. If the pupils attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
6. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, iff attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher, a member of SLT and the Family Liaison Officer and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who wil conduct a home visit.
7. After the two week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues t=until attendance stabilises at 90 percent.
8. If targets are not met, a referral to the EWO us made. Education Welfare Protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four week monitoring period is established and =, if there are not improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is not improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed penalty notice may be issued.