



## Attendance Policy

This policy is intended to be read by teachers, teaching assistants, parents, governors, inspectors, support staff and staff from other schools with which we may have links.

Date Approved: 7/7/16

Date of Review: Annually, Autumn Term 2017

### **Introduction**

This policy outlines the Attendance Guidelines used at St. Luke's. It reflects the school's values and ethos. The policy has been drawn up after staff consultation and has the full agreement of the governing body. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff.

### **Our vision**

To create a caring Christian community in which all individuals feel valued, supported and respected, and where potential is recognised and developed.

### **Rationale**

All school policies form a public and accountable statement of intent. This policy is intended to create an agreed whole-school approach of which staff, children, parents, governors and other agencies have a clear understanding. It is important that a positive attitude towards learning is encouraged among all children and staff in order to foster self-confidence and a sense of achievement. The policy also explains how we, as a school, meet our legal requirements in all subject areas.

### **School Attendance and the Law**

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and we must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again at the beginning of the afternoon session. Since September 2006, we have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education Regulations 2006, only the Headteacher (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, we may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted

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due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child. We need prior notice, in writing, of any intended absence, i.e medical appointments, funerals, weddings etc.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A we will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **Roles Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **School**

- Our registration System is Integris G2
- Start and close of registration
  - KS1 8.55am & 1.25pm
  - KS2 8.50am & 1.25pm
- We operate a first day contact service for any unknown absences.
- We will consider absence requests, with exceptional circumstances, on a case by case basis.
- Attendance reports are run weekly and parents/carers contacted with any concerns.
- On a case by case basis arrangements for re-integration following periods of absence. This will usually involve a meeting between the parents/carer and head teacher.

### **Parents/carers**

Parents are made aware that, where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.

- Parents/carers must only request leave if there are exceptional circumstances as family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances

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- Parents/carers have an expectation to work with school and/or Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance issues

### **Pupils**

- We expect that children attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons
- Registration is taken, by the teacher, in the class, using the Integris G2 system.
- Children arriving late must be signed in at the office by an adult. A reasonable explanation will be expected for the lateness.

### **EWS**

- Works within 4 quadrant based Area Attendance Teams to reduce persistent absence, improve overall attendance and give advice and support to children, families and schools.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

We may refer a pupil to Education Welfare Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The Education Welfare Service will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

### **Rewards/Celebrations**

We have a reward system in place to encourage Good and Excellent Attendance.

- Termly celebration assemblies – where certificates are given to pupils with 100% attendance for that term.
- Headteacher meets with and congratulates each student that has 100% attendance at the end of each term.

### **Evaluation and Review**

We will review this policy *annually* and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.