St Laurence Church Junior School

Attendance Policy

'We seek to provide a Christian ethos and education which promotes the all round development of each child and enables them to achieve success and gain a sense of self worth'
Aims

To impact on standards of attainment and progress by:

Maintaining and improving the levels of attendance, ensuring that there is a common and consistent practice amongst staff, enabling parents and pupils to understand that their level of attendance impacts on levels of attainment and progress.

We have high expectations at St Laurence and as such expect everyone to attend school and to be punctual.

Parents are formally informed by letter about the school’s attendance policy at the start of every academic year and when new pupils arrive in school there is an induction process that includes an explanation of the policy.

Attendance procedures

Registers
Registers are legal documents and MUST be marked accurately.
Registers are marked on line with each member of staff having a password protected access to the site.
Staff mark the register by noting who is absent and who is present
All registers must be marked and sent to the office by 9am
Children arriving between 9.00 and 9.30 will be marked as present by the office, but this will register as a late.
Any child arriving after 9.30am will be marked as ‘U’ which is an unauthorised absence and will affect their attendance.

Weekly absence report
The weekly absence reports will be filled in by the office. Any absence notes/appointment cards that are received should be seen by the class teacher and then sent to the office. They will be stored by the office.

First day phone calls
Registers should be sent to the office at 09.00. The office will then list the children who are not in school, check them against received messages, double check the absence with the class teacher and then contact parents about the children with unexplained absence. This will be completed by 10:00 a.m. at the latest.

When the children move to another school
A child will only be deregistered when school receives notification that the child is attending another school.
When a child leaves, the following information should be available to pass on to the new school:
   - all NFER/QCA data
   - SEN records (if applicable)
   - child protection notes (if applicable)
   - suspension/exclusion details (if applicable)

Monitoring absence
The PLPs should highlight any significant attendance concerns the School may have about a pupil. It can be addressed as a PLP target.

Class teachers can raise concerns about children and absence patterns with the Leadership Group. Print outs are available on individual children.

School operates a weekly monitoring system which highlights all children with less than 90% attendance.
A standard letter will be sent where a child’s attendance is of concern, i.e. 10 sessions of absence due to illness and/or attendance falls below 93%. School will work with families in an attempt to improve attendance.

School will monitor children who are repeatedly ‘late’ with letters being sent to inform parents.

Any children whose attendance does not improve or who present an immediate concern will be addressed via the SPOTLIGHT programme (most likely to be unexplained/inappropriate reasons for attendance less than 90%).
Parental requests for absence from School in Exceptional Circumstances

When parents make an absence request they complete the ‘Exceptional Circumstances - Leave in Term Time’ request form (see attached), the needs of the individual child will always be school’s first priority. Decisions will be made based on the criteria specified in the guidance:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of a parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

The Headteacher can authorise other exceptional circumstances see guidance attached.

Categories of absence

authorised/unauthorised
Parents are required to call in to school on each day of illness until the child returns to school. It is for the school to decide if the absence is to be authorised. For all unexplained absences, a Groupcall text will be sent in the first instance. After a period of 5 days, if no response has been received, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness
School will monitor the patterns of illness and take action to support the child and family when appropriate. There is also the option of not authorising any illness unless medical evidence is provided.

Medical Appointments
Medical appointments during school hours should be avoided if possible, however, if you need to take your child to an appointment a copy of the letter/appointment card is required in order to authorise the absence.

Holidays
Under new Government guidance, no holiday time is acceptable during School terms. It is the parent’s duty to ensure their child is able to come to School for 190 days a year. School should ensure this happens.

*St Laurence Church Junior School fully support this and will not authorise any holiday absence in term time. Any child who is taken on an unauthorised holiday that extends beyond 20 days will be taken off role on Day 21. Parents will be made aware of this possible outcome prior to the holiday and will be sent the appropriate letters leading up to de-registration.*

*For all absence requests, School has a formal process of written application and written outcome, working from the generic letters issued by the Local Authority.*
Leave in Term Time – Legal Guidance for Parents/ Carers

It is essential for children to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that children can reach their full potential. To achieve this, children need to attend school every day. We are sure you would not jeopardise your children’s academic progress by taking them away during term time.

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed and Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Birmingham Local Authority’s ‘Leave in Term Time Guidance’ and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

For example:
- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child; nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from School. The Head Teacher will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teachers authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:
Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.
- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:
"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:
- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

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EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES - LEAVE IN TERM TIME REQUEST

Pupil's Name ............................................. D.O.B .......... Form .........

Pupil's Name ............................................. D.O.B .......... Form .........

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Dates of Absence

From ........................................... To ................. No of school days ............

I understand that if leave is agreed:

• if travelling abroad, I/we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
• I/we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
• if I/we do not return at the agreed time; I/we am/are aware that I/we may be issued with
  a penalty notice, and could be fined £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made.
  If I do not pay the fine, I/we could then be required to attend Court; this could result in a
  fine of up to £1000 per child and having a criminal record.
• after four weeks of absence my/our child/ren may be removed from the school register and
  I/we will then be responsible for finding a new school on my/our return.

Parent/Carer Name

_____________________________________________________________________________________

DOB........................................................

Address......................................................

Signature..................................................

Date.......................................................  

Parent/Carer Name

_____________________________________________________________________________________

DOB........................................................

Address......................................................

Signature..................................................

Date.....................................................  

Request agreed / denied

Signed ....................................... Head Teacher  Dated ......................................