



## **St Ives Junior School**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Rationale**

Our aim at SIJS is to ensure that pupils have excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, in order that they are able to succeed and thrive at school and maximise their learning time. A strong partnership between the home and school is the foundation for good attendance and attitudes towards learning and success.

Good attendance is important because:

- There is a clear link between attendance and social and academic progress
- It helps children to cope with friendships, routine and the learning environment
- There is greater continuity, making learning more satisfying
- Transition to the next phase of education is easier and smoother
- It establishes a good ethic and expectations for life, future education and employment
- 90% attendance averages half a day missed every week
- 80% attendance averages 1 day a week missed and could mean that a child has missed 38 days of education in a full year

Our aim is that all children thrive and flourish at school and we therefore aim for a ***minimum*** of 96% attendance for every child.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with Local Authority guidelines and DfE legislation, and takes into account:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

## **Attendance procedures**

***A child who is absent from school or arriving late is a potential safeguarding concern.***

Legally the register must be marked twice each day.

The school day begins at 8.50am and registers are taken immediately at this time and at the start of the afternoon session at 1.30pm.

Any pupil not present when the register is marked at 8.50am must sign in at reception.

Registers officially close at 9.30am.

If a child is not attending school on a particular day, the parent/carer should inform the school before 9.15am.

If no reason for non-attendance is received, the school will text parents/carers and ask them to contact the school to explain the absence.

If no call is received, the school will telephone the parent at 9.30am and again at 9.45am if necessary. Alternative contact numbers will be used if no reply can be gained from the primary contact.

If parents/carers still cannot be contacted to confirm the child's whereabouts, a home visit may be considered to ensure the child's safety.

A log of texts and calls is kept by the Attendance Administrator, and any safeguarding concerns will be immediately reported to the Head or Deputy Headteacher, who are the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the school.

All parents/carers will be notified of their child's attendance percentage on a termly basis.

## **Absence Procedures**

If a child is absent, the parent/carer must:

- contact the school as soon as possible, but before 9.15am, on the first day of absence, stating the reason for the absence.
- call the school on each of the following days of absence before 9.15am unless there is a definite return date given on the first day of absence

## **Monitoring of Absence**

If attendance falls under 96% the school will contact the parent/carer to inform them and offer any support needed to improve their child's attendance, unless reasons for this are already known.

The parent/carer will be informed again by letter, if attendance does not improve or drops further and again will be asked to support an improvement. Parents will be supported in this by the school's Family Liaison worker

If attendance does not improve, or falls below 90%, the parent/carer will be invited to arrange a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or the school's Family Liaison worker to devise a plan to improve attendance. Advice and support may also be sought from the Education Welfare Officer or Social Services.

## **Impact of absence**

% attendance in a school year	Days of absence in a school year	Weeks missed in a school year
98%	4	Less than 1 week
95%	9.5	Almost 2 school weeks
90%	19	Almost 4 school weeks
85%	28.5	Almost 6 school weeks

## **Lateness**

### ***A child arriving late is a potential safeguarding concern.***

Punctuality is essential to each child's success and to the smooth running of the school day. If a child misses the start of the day, they miss the opportunity to be organised, prepared and settled and may also miss important teaching and other information concerning the school day. Children arriving late also disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing for the child and may also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children progress through their school life and on into the wider world.

### **Managing Lateness**

Any pupil not present at 8.50am when the register is taken **must** report to the school office and sign in. This is to ensure their safety and so that we are fully aware of children on site. After 9.30am a child will be marked absent as late after registers close.

### **Persistent Lateness**

We define persistent lateness as 6 days late in any half term.

Parents of children who are consistently late will:

- be contacted to explain the lateness and requested to ensure/offered support with ensuring that punctuality is improved
- be invited to a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or the school's Family Liaison worker if there is no improvement

Where persistent lateness occurs without an acceptable reason, advice may be sought from the Education Welfare Officer or Social Services.

## **Illness**

It is the school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence may be required.

Medical evidence may be requested in situations where:

- attendance is less than 90%
- there are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- there is a pattern of absence on the same days of the week

- the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated and where medical problems may require the school to seek additional support for the child
- an absence for illness is longer than 5 days

### **Absence due to Appointments**

Parents/carers are requested to make non urgent doctor, dentist and other medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible.

### **Support**

SIJS recognises that poor attendance may be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. We encourage parents and carers to keep us informed of any difficulties or changes in their child's life that may affect their attendance and/or behaviour in school. This may include bereavement or loss, divorce or separation, domestic abuse, mental or other illness. The school will always do everything possible to support them, including engaging with outside agencies such as Family Support, Education Welfare and Social Services.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

See Appendix A

### **Requests for absences, including holidays, during term time**

***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 says that family holidays and leave of absence may not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.***

***Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise 10 days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations.***

SIJS recognises the particular seasonal nature that affects much of the St Ives community, and the value of family holidays. However, regular school attendance is essential for children to achieve their potential.

Only requests that are under 'exceptional circumstances' may be authorised. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are '***rare, significant, unavoidable and short***'.

A request for absence must be made on the appropriate form, giving all the details requested. (See Appendix B)

Any request should be made ***at least 10 days in advance*** wherever possible.

A request should be made, and its outcome received ***before any holiday or event is booked***. An absence cannot be authorised after it has taken place.

We expect parents who are not together to liaise with each other regarding any request for their child's term time absence.

When considering a request for absence, the headteacher will take into account the following:

- the child's overall pattern of attendance and punctuality – attendance less than 96% or persistent lateness in particular are likely to prohibit authorisation of a request
- the effect the absence will have on the child's education and ability to achieve
- the length of any holiday - (requests for **more than 10 sessions/5 days** in any one academic year will not be authorised)
- evidence to show that a holiday requested may not be taken during **any other** school holiday period (this includes all available holiday periods – summer, Christmas and Easter breaks and October, February and June half terms)

If a leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, or for longer than was agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If sessions of unauthorised absence become a concern, the local authority may be informed, and further action may be taken.

Requests for term time absence cannot be authorised for reasons such as:

- birthday or anniversary celebrations
- accommodating other family members commitments, such as their working obligations or because a sibling is attending an event
- concerts or day trips
- cost of events or trips during school holidays
- extending a weekend or school holiday visit, trip or excursion

### **Data Analysis**

The school collects and stores attendance data using a management information system - SIMs. The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send required data as part of the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The school uses attendance data to identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, class or by groups of pupils (e.g. gender or ethnicity). The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to act to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

**Policy date: 21.09.18**

**Implementation date: immediate**

**To be reviewed annually**

## APPENDIX A

### Responsibilities

#### Secretary

- Text or call parents at the appropriate times to ascertain reasons for absence, in accordance with the policy

#### Family Liaison Officer

- Call parents where no contact has been received or reason for absence provided
- Analyse attendance information monthly/half-termly and identify continuous or frequent absence or persistent lateness
- Contact the parents to discuss the reasons and any issues
- Support as necessary to improve attendance

#### Classroom staff

- Take the register promptly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and return to the Attendance Administrator.
- Mark late any child arriving after 8.50am when the register is taken. Ensure that any child arriving late has signed in at reception, giving the time that they arrived on the school site.
- Promote and praise good or improved attendance and punctuality at every opportunity
- Ensure that relevant information about attendance, illness, lateness or changes in circumstances are passed on to the Family Liaison Officer(e.g. where a reason for absence has been given to the class teacher).

#### Pupils

- Walk or travel to school as agreed with their parent or carer.
- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Sign in at reception if arriving after 8.50am or after returning from an appointment

#### Parents/Carers

*Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement under the 1996 Education Act.*

- Inform the school on the first day of any absence as soon as possible, but before 9.15am, and on subsequent days of absence unless a definite return date is specified on the first day
- Inform the school of any known absences in advance
- Endeavour to keep non-urgent medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible
- Only request a term time absence where this cannot be avoided and where it meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances

#### Headteacher and Governors

- Consider requests for term time absence against the attendance policy criteria
- Monitor attendance and punctuality
- Support parents, carers and pupils in securing good attendance and punctuality
- Monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy

**APPENDIX B**

**St Ives Junior School**

**Request for Term Time Absence**



Before requesting leave of absence during term time, please read the St Ives Junior School attendance policy which outlines the procedures and the situations where an absence may be authorised. Please do not request an absence that does not meet the criteria outlined in the policy. All requests will be considered in line with this policy alongside individual circumstances. Further information or clarification may be requested.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of absence requested from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of school days: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give the reason for the request below:

If the request is for a term-time holiday, break or visit, please confirm why this absence is not able to be accommodated during any other school holiday time (i.e. a half term break, Christmas, Easter or Summer break):

Please provide evidence from an employer or evidence of employment to support this:

--

Please outline the social, emotional, cultural or religious benefit to your child:

--

Has a request for term time absence already been made during this academic year? Yes/No

For how many days was the previous request made? \_\_\_\_\_

Was this request authorised? Yes/No

I confirm that I have parental responsibility for \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ date request made: \_\_\_\_\_

***If a request is not authorised, but leave from school is still taken, this could lead to further action being taken or advice being sought.***

Outcome:

Request authorised	
Request not authorised	
Number of days authorised	

Signed:

Date:

Current attendance percentage:



## **APPENDIX E**

### **Attendance concern letter templates**

Dear Parent/Carer

Working together with parents and carers to secure good, regular attendance is essential to children's all-round success at school.

Your child's current attendance record shows that their attendance has fallen to below 90%. This equates to an average of half a day a week of non-attendance and could have a negative impact on their progress and achievement at school. We ask for and appreciate your support in ensuring that their attendance overall improves.

If you would like to discuss this, or would like some support with your child's attendance, please let us know and we can arrange a meeting to discuss this. We will continue to monitor attendance in line with our policy and will notify you if we have any further concerns. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Ms Ruth Davey  
Headteacher

---

Dear Parent/Carer

Working together with parents and carers to secure good, regular attendance is essential to children's all-round success at school.

Your child's current attendance record shows that their attendance has fallen to below 85%. This equates to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day a week absence on average, which is a serious concern due to the impact it can have on their progress and achievement at school.

It is always our aim to work with and support parents in order to secure good attendance and outcomes for children. Therefore, please call the school office as soon as possible in order to make an appointment to discuss ways of improving this situation.

Thank you.  
Yours sincerely

Ms Ruth Davey  
Headteacher