





# St John's Green Primary School

Learn to Live, Live to Learn

Headteacher Mr Simon Billings  
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We   
Maths

We are all  
writers ...

We are growing  
our learning 

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## Attendance Policy

### 1 Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are unable to come to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### 2 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 Education Authority.

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

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (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, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code. ***It is therefore vital that parents/carers notify the school by 9.30 a.m. of their child's absence giving the school a reason. The school accepts phone messages, e-mail messages and text messages for this purpose and the contact details are at the top of the weekly newsletter and in all communication from the school.***

Ammendments to the 2006 regulations have come into force as of September 2013 and references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days have been removed. The ammendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. If the pupil fails to attend school within 10 school days immediately following the date the pupil

was due to return and the school has no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any other unavoidable cause and **both the school and the Local Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is** the pupil can be removed from roll and referred to Children Missing Education (CME).

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

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.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence should be justifiable and the reason for rejection must be recorded and conveyed to the parent(s) in writing. A letter refusing a request should explain the reason it is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance and that a penalty notice may be issued if the absence is taken without the school's permission.

In a small number of cases the school could have concerns about a pupil's welfare, such as that the pupil will be **forced into marriage** whilst abroad. In such cases, the school should seek support from the Local Authority.

### 3 Definitions

#### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised if the school has received notification from a parent/carer, and the child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can decide that the absence is authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

#### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without reasons acceptable to the school.

### 4 If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact the child's parents/carers.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

All absence will be recorded in the registers with the set codes (see Appendix A)

## 5 Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. religious observance. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be authorised.

**The school will not authorise absence for special treat days for example – birthdays.**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten school days for an annual holiday. As stated earlier the amendments to the 2006 Education act remove the option to apply for up to 10 days family holiday.

The school will however consider requests for Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. A letter must be attached to the request form (appendix B) outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence is being applied for. **Any requests for leave of absence will only be considered by the school if the child has 97% attendance or better in the 14 weeks preceeding the request.**

Should the school decide not to authorise a leave of absence, then the reason for the rejection will be recorded and conveyed to the parent(s) in writing.

However, the school has a statutory duty to discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason as absences may have a negative impact on the pupil's educational attainment and progress. **A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.**

The school will not consider requests for leave of absence

- 1, During September or in the case of a Foundation pupil starting school in January, during January.
- 2, During SATs

### ***Popular question – Can I take my child on holiday in term time?***

*The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the HeadTeacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.*

*Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.*

## 6 Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

At St John's Green we recognise our culturally diverse nature. We also appreciate and value the fact that parents/carers may wish to take their children back to their country of origin to enable them to fully understand their roots. Parents may apply to take their children back to their country of origin by making an application using appendix B.

## **7 Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be initially informed of the schools concern through a letter. If attendance does not improve the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Team, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

## **8 Actions the school will take in the event of persistent absence and lateness**

Children with less than 95% attendance in a half term review will be written to by the school advising them of the amount of absence their child has had and unless the school is aware of extenuating circumstances, will request a meeting with the parents.

If a child is raised as a concern in a subsequent review then the school invites the parents/carers in for an attendance meeting with the school's EWO. Following this meeting the child's attendance is discussed and actions put in place to promote improved attendance.

Further to the above the school will also ask for medical proof if a child is subsequently absent, otherwise the absence will be recorded as un-authorised.

If after the above actions have taken place and attendance has not improved then the school's EWO will begin legal proceedings against the child's parents/carers.

In the case of persistent lateness (more than twice a week) arriving after the school start time. 5 minutes after the school day begins, the school writes to the parents advising them of the disruption to both the school day and the child's education. Any child who arrives 15 minutes after the start of the school day – will be marked down as an un-authorised absence unless the reason given by the parent/carer is plausible. i.e. car breaking down.

Should the lateness continue to be persistent then the parents/carers will be invited in to the school to talk with the Headteacher about strategies to improve timekeeping.

If lateness continues then the school will involve the EWO and legal proceedings may be instigated.

## **10 Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a reward for their attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term.

A class award will be given termly to the class that has the best overall attendance for that term.

A class award will be given termly for the class that has the most 100% children.

A weekly attendance award will be awarded to the class that has the best attendance for the that week.

## **11 Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **12 Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The Office Administrator will be responsible for monitoring attendance in the school, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will respond in line with this policy. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parent/carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

## **Appendix A**

### **NEW ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix B - Guidance to Headteachers on leave of absence

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

**Please complete one application per child.**

Name of Child	
D.O.B:	
Class:	

Date of First Day of Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Return: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Days Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important: A letter must be attached to this request, outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which a leave of absence is being applied for.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**School/office use only:**

Attendance % preceeding 14 weeks			
Number of sessions absence this academic year	Auth	Unauthorised	Total