



Attendance Policy Document

Academic Year 2021-2022

Policy Aims

We believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance which cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it must therefore be a high priority of the school, governors, parents and pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupils' absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching and learning for themselves and others. Any problems hindering full attendance need to be identified and acted upon as quickly as possible. The aim of the school is to facilitate their pupil's regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to achieve their full academic potential.

To encourage maximum attendance, there must be consistent employment of this policy alongside regular monitoring of each child's attendance.

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

We take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School as well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children. Attendance is discussed with the whole school through rewards and incentives which include:

- Punctuality Rewards
- Other Certificates.

Attendance and punctuality is actively promoted to parents and children at St Francis of Assisi Primary School through:

- Head Teacher's newsletters with attendance and punctuality stated.
- Other letters to parents/carers.
- Discussions with children on an individual basis and as a whole school celebration each term.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013).

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Any absence from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's future progress and continuity of learning. Regular absence for such reasons as holidays taken in term time can have a significant impact on achievement.

It is important to note that it is the legal duty of those with parental responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. By law, parents/carers are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age, are in receipt of an education as a registered pupil at a school. Children who are registered at a school are expected to attend regularly and **absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or the child is authorised to be absent by the Head Teacher.**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a valid reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the Head Teacher of the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the Head Teacher of the school does not approve absence)

REGISTRATION

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This is shown on our computer records.

Staff, pupils and parents should see the taking of the register as an integral part of the day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the School's Head Teacher's role. The Head Teacher has the primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in the classes and for contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality also ensuring notes explaining absences are collected and maintain an accurate register of attendance. At St Francis of Assisi School, the Head Teacher has overall responsibility; however this is delegated to the School Administrators, employed Education Welfare Officer (Education Welfare Ltd) and class teachers; all of whom have their part to play in being responsible for ensuring attendance is a key priority in their day to day work.

School will ensure the following:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
 - This is currently completed at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon).
 - The school uses electronic registers and absence codes are used from this system.
- Early contact with parent/carer when a pupil fails to attend school – unless a good reason has already been provided.
 - The school office will contact parents/carers if a reason has not been recorded.
- Prompt and confidential action on any identified problems.
 - This may be through discussions with the class teacher, school office, the Head Teacher or Education Welfare Ltd
- Measures are taken to promote good attendance.
- First day response actions take place (see below).

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.
- They provide the school with three telephone contacts and keep the school updated of any changes to contact details.

We expect that pupils:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.

- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in the School has an electronic attendance register. It is School's policy that registers on a morning are to be completed between 9.00am and 9.05am. On an afternoon there are specific times for each year group.

	Start time	Register taken
Reception	12.30 pm	12.35 pm and 12.40 pm
Year 1	12.45 pm	12.45 pm and 12.50 pm
Year 2	12.55 pm	1.00 pm and 1.05 pm
Year 3 to 6	1.15 pm	1.20 pm and 1.25 pm

Following registration, the register will be closed so the Administration Team and Attendance Officer can access them.

It is our policy to record a late mark (L) for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place.

Children who arrive at school after 9.25am or 30mins after the afternoon school start time will have a late registration mark recorded (U).

Further Absence Information

Absence Due To Illness

It is the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We would like to receive notification as soon as the child is absent from school. If a child is absent due to illness, parents/carers should call the school on **each day** of the absence stating a reason by 9.30am. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, unauthorised reasons will be recorded on the attendance register. We need to receive information when the child returns to school, in the form of a note and any medical evidence such as prescription, appointment card etc. (It is good practice to provide medical evidence for absences where appropriate) Once medical evidence is formally requested by school or Education Welfare Ltd this will be an on-going process.

If contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents/carers then the school will contact the home by telephone call. **If there is no contact, the absence will be deemed unauthorised until contact has been made.**

Please ensure school has up to date contact details at all times, this is also a health and safety requirements.

First Day Response

If a child is absent from school and the school has not yet received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The school administrator will follow this system:

- Telephone parents' contact numbers or email parents.
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- School administrator and/or Senior member of staff to speak to the parents/carers at home time, if they are in school to pick up other children
- Speak to the parent/carer face to face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers if required.

- If contact cannot be made by phone call to the parent/carer, all telephone numbers provided by parents will be used to make contact. Failure to make contact to any number provided by a parent/carer will result in a home visit by a member of staff.
- The parent/carer will be asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. If a legitimate reason for absence has not been made within 2 days of the absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents/Carers are also requested to endeavour to make any medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Please ensure that your child attends school before and after the appointment. If appointments are allocated during school hours, *and a pupil's attendance is below 90%*, we may request that the medical evidence should be provided – this could include an appointment card or letter from the hospital. **If evidence cannot be provided, the absence may be classed as unauthorised.**

Where concerns continue and/or a pupil has had 10 consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence from school and no contact is made, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service under Children Missing Education/attendance procedures. Where it is suspected that a pupil may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, radicalisation, or is a runaway or young carer, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Local Authority attendance procedures will be followed in relation to school transfers, exclusions and pupils who are dual registered and attending alternative educational provision.

The Attendance Team will keep all notes and notes of telephone messages and any verbal explanations. These will all be dated.

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the School need take no action beyond the staff in school recording the fact in the Signing out Book for the purpose of emergency evacuation. The pupil although registered is not physically present. Similarly the School must note the presence of a pupil (again for emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

Lateness and Punctuality

School starts promptly at 8.55 am. It is St Francis of Assisi School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. School gates open at 8.45am. Doors are open from 8.50 am and pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55 am ready to start the school day. Registers are marked between 8.55 am and 9.05 am and children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by this time. At 9.15 am registers are closed. If a child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark in the register to show they are on site, but this will not count as a present mark and **it may be classed as an unauthorised absence.**

In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period. For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted. Anyone arriving late **must** report to the office. Office staff and the Attendance Team will be there to challenge the lateness. Office staff will amend the child's presence on the electronic register and in the late book.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances enquires may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. The School's Attendance Officer /paid Education Welfare Officer may need to seek an early meeting with parents of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time without valid reason whilst keeping the Head Teacher informed. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the School's Attendance Officer/paid Education Welfare Officer will consult with the Local Authority

Leave of Absence during Term Time

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are absent, they are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons on their return to school. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which the school and parents/carers must seek to avoid.

The Department for Education have made amendments to regulations with regard to school attendance. From 1st September 2013, regulations specify that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The legislation makes it clear that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

Since September 2017, we will not grant any leave of absence for pupils during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (see below). **Requests for a leave of absence should be made at least four school weeks prior to the first day of absence and in writing to the Head Teacher using the appropriate request form (Appendix 1) stating the reason in full for and the length of the request with the appropriate evidence. The evidence will be taken into consideration however applicants must be aware that the submission of evidence does not automatically guarantee that the absence will be authorised.** Submission of the request does not guarantee authorisation. **Please note that a family holiday during term time is not classed as exceptional circumstances.**

The Head Teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence the Head Teacher will also consider:

- The impact for the students' academic progress
- The pupil's attendance over the academic year.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening illness or critical illness of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (medical evidence may be required)
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Head Teachers should use their discretion having heard from parents/carers about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Religious observance
- Weddings of parents and siblings

Examples of circumstances **NOT** considered as exceptional include:

- Family holiday during term time
- Family holiday taken in term time due to parental work commitments or costs

- Family holiday for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where the person is seriously ill (medical evidence may be required)
- Pilgrimages by parents

Family emergencies require careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate, 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 at difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background at times of uncertainty.

Following receipt of a written request for leave in term time the Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is genuine, exceptional and urgent reasons for a child to be absent during term time.

Parents will be notified of the outcome of the leave of application request in writing - See Appendix 2, 3, 4 or 5 depending on the circumstances.

Late submissions of leave of absence forms and/or leave of absence taken without schools prior knowledge and permission may also be subject to penalty notice procedures.

Pupils who have 20 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence may be at risk of losing their school place.

Further information can be found on Stockton LA website:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools/school-attendance/>

The following documents are for additional information.

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/1958990/attendance-and-absence-management-policy.pdf>

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/1958992/penalty-notice-code-of-conduct.pdf>

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/1958991/guidance-on-exceptional-circumstances-authorised-absence-in-term-time.pdf>

For your information, the **penalty is £60 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent, per child if the penalty is paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days, then the local authority must either prosecute under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Monitoring Attendance

Persistent Absence

A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90% regardless of whether it is authorised absence. School, supported by Education Welfare Ltd, monitors attendance on a regular basis and is supported through termly register checks from the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teacher's role. They have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in the class, for collecting notes explaining absences, and for maintaining an accurate register.

Early intervention may include communication with parents/carers, by face-to-face discussions, telephone, or letter.

If the teacher, administrator or Education Welfare Ltd. has concerns about a pupil's attendance, those concerns will be discussed with the Head Teacher who will decide on appropriate action and intervention. This may involve a letter to parents/carers, notifying of punctuality or attendance concerns, further monitoring and arrangements to meet with parents/carers to discuss further. Letters are not within the attendance policy as are bespoke to the individual situation.

A regular review of attendance will continue following this:

- If attendance has improved, this should be recognised by school and there should be no further action.
- If attendance has not improved, then options include inviting the parents/carers into school to further discuss attendance concerns and exploring ways in which support may be offered to bring about change. This may involve a home visit. An Early Help Assessment will be offered to the parents to identify any additional support required.

Further advice and support about monitoring and managing concerns may be sought from the school's Local Authority Attendance Officer who also completes termly register checks.

- If no change has been effected in a pupil's attendance and the absences remain unauthorised, then further interventions will be set up. The Head Teacher, in liaison with Education Welfare Ltd, will prioritise the list of students to be referred.
- Weekly/fortnightly register checks of absentees close to or below an attendance rate of 90% will be carried out following discussions with the Education Welfare Ltd and the LA Attendance Officer.
- Meetings with the Education Welfare Ltd will be held on a regular basis.
- The purpose of the meetings will be to:
 - Discuss individual pupils who are close to being identified as 'persistent absentees'
 - Discuss and agree upon desired/necessary actions to referrals
 - Report on home visits, outcomes of intervention.

Where attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, the LA Attendance Officer and school, with a view to improving attendance, will undertake a period of more intensive intervention that will result in the legal process being initiated.

Signed: L. Probets
Head Teacher

Date: 12.09.21



PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Dear Parent/Carer

I understand that you have requested a pupil Leave of Absence Form to apply for a holiday. The form you need to complete is outlined on the reverse of this letter. Before completing the form, I would like to draw your attention to the details below regarding pupil absence during term time.

The Government recognises the importance of your child attending school for every session available to them and not taking time off during the school year for holidays. We are therefore asking you as parents/carers to avoid taking your child out of school during the holiday periods.

The Government has introduced **PENALTY NOTICES** for Local Authorities to issue to parents who take their children out of school during term time. In line with Government recommendations, holidays will now only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and **benefiting from reduced holiday costs outside of the school holidays is not considered an exceptional circumstance.**

Details of **PENALTY NOTICES** are outlined below:

- Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000.**
- Prosecution under section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and /or 3 months imprisonment.**

To ensure your child benefits from their full educational entitlement and to avoid getting a PENALTY NOTICE, you should only take holidays during the school's holiday periods which are published well in advance.

Thank you for your support

Mrs Louise Probets
Head Teacher

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- 2 week's leave of absence in term time reduces your child's attendance to 95% over a year.
- This reduces your child's attendance to below the National average.
- It equates to your child missing a half day per fortnight of their education.
- Pupils are only in school for 190 days each year.
- There are 175 other days for holidays and other activities.

How to use this Form:

Use for all absences other than sickness absence.
 Return to the school at least **four school weeks** before the first date of requested absence.
 Use a separate absence form for each absence and for each child.

Guidance:

Head Teacher/Principal may not grant any leave of absence during school term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (please note a family holiday during in term time is not exceptional circumstances).
 Please refer to; <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Parent/Guardian to complete this section:

Name of child:	Class:	Year Group:
Is this the 1 st request for absence this academic year?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Has a Leave of Absence been requested in previous years?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Please state which Academic Year No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Dates requested: From: To:	No of school days requested:	
Please indicate any other school to which you are applying: Name of Pupil:		
Reason for request:		
Please ensure you have read the information overleaf before signing the form.		
Mother's Name (Please Print).....	Father's Name (Please Print).....	
Signed:Date:.....	Signed:Date:.....	

School Office to complete this section:

Date Application Received	
Attendance Percentage for: last academic year 2020/21 and academic year 2019/20	
Current Attendance Percentage:	

Head Teacher to complete this section:

The request is approved:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason:	
The request is not approved. If the pupil is absent as proposed above it will be unauthorised for the following reason:	Refer for Penalty Notice Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason:	
Signed:	Date:

Evidence of exceptional circumstances is required when submitting a leave of absence request.



Letter Regarding Leave of Absence Request- authorised

Date

Dear (Parents full name)

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (DOB.....) out of school for a holiday during term time during the dates fromto i.e xx days

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless;

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- the proprietor (head teacher) or person authorised by the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided **to authorise** your request for holiday leave as I am satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met and in this case there will be no further action.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Louise Proberts

Head Teacher

Parents address

Address1

Address2

Address3

Postcode



Letter Regarding Leave of Absence Request (1)

Date

Dear (Parents full name)

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (DOB.....) out of school for a holiday during term time during the dates fromto i.e xx days

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless;

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- the proprietor (head teacher) or person authorised by the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided **not to authorise** your request for holiday leave as I am not satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has not been met and in this case there will be no further action. If however your child fails to return to school this may result in further action being undertaken.

[Childs name] is expected in school during these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Louise Probets

Head Teacher

Parents address

Address1

Address2

Address3

Postcode



Letter Regarding Leave of Absence Request (2)

Date

Dear (Parent's full name)

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (DOB.....) out of school for a holiday during term time during the dates.....to

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless;

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- the proprietor (head teacher) or person authorised by the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided not to authorise your request for holiday leave as I am not satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met.

[Childs name] is expected in school during these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to £120, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Cleveland Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher



Letter Regarding Leave of Absence Without Notification

Date

Dear (Parent's full name)

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I believe you have taken (insert name of child), (DOB....) out of school for the purpose of a holiday without making a request to the head teacher. Leave of absence in term time requests must be submitted to the head teacher prior to the leave of absence commencing to consider if the exceptional circumstances criteria is met.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless;

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- the proprietor (Head teacher) or person authorised by the Head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional** circumstances relating to that application

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If you do not provide me with medical evidence or any other evidence within 10 days from the date of this letter for the absences (from..... to.....), I will unauthorise this period of absence and make a penalty notice referral request to the local authority.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to **£120**, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Teesside Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher