



EAST CROMPTON ST JAMES' C.E. (V.A.) PRIMARY SCHOOL
St. James' Street, Shaw, Oldham OL2 7TD Tel: 01706 847360

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date: Revised May 2015
Approved by Governors: 15.6.15

Following discussion with staff, governors, parents and pupils, the following policy has been developed and outlines our joint vision, together with the attendance expectations and procedures for East Crompton St James Primary School.

OUR VISION

At East Crompton St James we firmly believe in the value of an education which provides the skills and opportunities to fulfil each child's full potential. We recognise the importance of pupils being in school every day and on time in order to fully access this.

Pupils, parents and staff will work together to maximise attendance and punctuality so that children can receive the full value of their school experience. Our target level of attendance for all children is a minimum of 95% for each school year.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDING SCHOOL

Parents are legally required to ensure that their children receive a legally recognised education. School attendance has huge additional benefits, including;

- Building friendships and developing positive relationships
- Access to 'other worlds' through books and other media
- Developing new skills in areas such as art, music, technology and computers
- Developing teamwork skills, a sense of responsibility and other life and social skills through interaction with peers
- Developing a work ethic and understanding of the importance of routines, structure and rules in the working environment
- Enhanced self-esteem and a sense of choice

EXPECTATIONS

What is expected of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

- To recognise the importance of regular attendance at school and to do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are having problems at school which may impact on their attendance

What is expected of the Parents;

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attend school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education

Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children. Parents are expected;

- To provide a home environment and routines conducive to good attendance and punctuality e.g. fixed and suitably early bedtimes/getting up times and suitable breakfast routines
- To recognise the importance of regular attendance at school and to keep requests for their child to be absent to an absolute minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferable before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dresses, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and Attendance Improvement Officer to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- Not to allow children to take time off school for minor ailments – particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

What is expected of the School:

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register must record whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by the Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum
- To appropriately reward pupils for good attendance

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Attendance Improvement Service the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The Attendance Improvement Service is the enforcement agency of the LEA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), and Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

PROCEDURES

Absence

If your child is absent from school, you should notify the school office as soon as possible by telephone (01706 847 360) BEFORE 9.30AM. If necessary, leave a message on the answer phone. Verbal explanation from the child on return to school is not sufficient. If the school office does not receive adequate notification of the absence of a child, then it will be deemed unauthorised.

School reserves the right to investigate a child's absence and a member of staff or Attendance Improvement Officer may call at the child's home address to verify the illness or other reasons given.

The Executive Head Teacher reserves the right to record an absence as unauthorised even if the school has received a letter or phone call. Where a child has persistent absences due to illness and there is no underlying cause, school may refuse to authorise further absences pending medical investigation.

Absences other than Illness

Parents who wish to take their children out of school in term time must first seek permission from the Executive Head Teacher detailing the circumstances. Parents may obtain an Absence Request Form from the school office. This should be completed and returned to the office for authorisation. If the Executive Head Teacher cannot authorise the request, or feels it is not in the best interests of the child, the reason will be recorded on the form and you may be asked to make an appointment to discuss the issue.

Absences during term time will only be authorised in genuinely exceptional circumstances. Examples of this may include;

- Up to 2 days for the wedding or funeral of a family member
- A day or partial day to take part in a sporting competition
- The death of a close family member
- An absence involving an activity of genuine educational value

Examples of absences which are **NOT** due to exceptional circumstances include;

- Holidays because it is cheaper in term time
- Holidays because it is the only time a parent can get off work
- Holidays booked 'by mistake'

Punctuality

Not only is it important for a child to be at school each day, but also for them to arrive at school on time.

School starts at 8.55 am. Any child arriving after this time is late and should enter by the main entrance and sign in the late book located in the School Office. Children who arrive in school after 9.30 am are deemed to have missed the morning session. If there is no known reason for their lateness this will be recorded as an unauthorised morning absence.

Attendance Improvement Service

An Officer from the Attendance Improvement Services visits the school regularly to discuss individual pupils who are having attendance or punctuality problems. In agreement with the Executive Head Teacher, the Officer will respond with appropriate action. It is recognised that there are sometimes valid reasons for absence. Responses from the Attendance Improvement Service could not include a letter or home visit from an Attendance Improvement Officer or, in extreme circumstances, a fine for non-attendance.

Parents should be aware that a warning noticed (Fixed Penalty Notice) can be issued after 5 days unauthorised absence in a school year (including unauthorised holidays). Further absence can then lead to a fine of £100 per child for each person with legal parental responsibility for that child (regardless of whether both parents live at the same address or not).

Parents should be aware that a fine for non-attendance can be issued to parents without notice in the case of unauthorised holidays of 5 days or more.

Reporting attendance to Parents

At the end of each academic year we send an attendance certificate for each child in their school report. If the school or the Attendance Improvement Service contacts a parent or carer regarding attendance during the school year, a copy of the child's attendance certificate will be available to them.

Rewards

At the end of the academic year, children with 100% attendance receive a certificate in recognition of this achievement.

Procedures for Teachers

Registration

Registers are kept in the School Office. Children may be sent to collect and return registers.

For safety and security reasons, and to ensure lunch numbers are correct, it is important that registers are filled in accurately and sent to the office promptly, i.e. **by 9.15** each morning and 15 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

If a child enters the class late, but before the registers have been returned to the office, they should be recorded as late (L).

If a teacher knows why a child in their class is absent, or they receive a letter or note in a child's planner or reading record, they should include a note in the register so that this can be recorded by the office staff.

If a teacher has been informed that a child will be collected before the end of school, e.g. for an appointment, they should include a note in the register so that this can be recorded by the office staff.

Children who arrive after the registers have been returned should have entered by the front door and signed in the late book. Teachers should make sure any latecomers have done this. These children will be marked late by the office staff if they come in before 9.30 am but after the registers have been returned. Pupils arriving after 9.30 am are recorded as 'Late after Registration Closed (U).

Pupil Absence Records

Any Staff member receiving a written or verbal report of a child's absence must forward this immediately to the school office.

Where a pupil's absence has been reported by telephone, office staff will record this in the register. Written explanations for absence from the parent will be kept on file.

Where a holiday has been authorised by the Executive Head Teacher, a copy of the authorisation will be kept on file.

Absences will be checked each morning by 10 am and office staff will attempt to contact the parents of all absentees for whom no reason for absence is known.

Each week an unexplained absence list will be computer generated. If office staff are aware of the reasons for a child's absence they will input this directly into the computer and the absence will not appear on the list.

Copy registers will be printed from the school's MIS and will be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years.

Absconding;

Pupils who are seen absconding from school must not be pursued as this may lead to them running into the road to escape. If they remain near the school, staff should attempt to persuade them to return. If they will not return and choose to run away, the Head of School or Senior Leader, the child's parents and the police must be informed immediately. The Head of School should always be informed if a child leaves the premises, even if they return.

If a child is absent when the afternoon register is taken having been present in the morning, and no reason has been given for their absence, this must be reported urgently to the office so that the situation can be clarified before the police/parents are contacted.