

# **St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School**



## **Attendance Policy**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Our School Vision and Core Christian Values

We will teach wisdom, model and expect respect for all. We will nurture perseverance, patience, responsibility, creativity, honesty and hope, equipping our children for life in all its fullness as honest adults in our diverse and ever-changing world.

We aspire to work collaboratively with our diocese, local authority, national and global communities through our motto and vision which calls for all seeds in our community to be nourished together:

**Motto: 'We are a team that achieve amazing things every day!'**

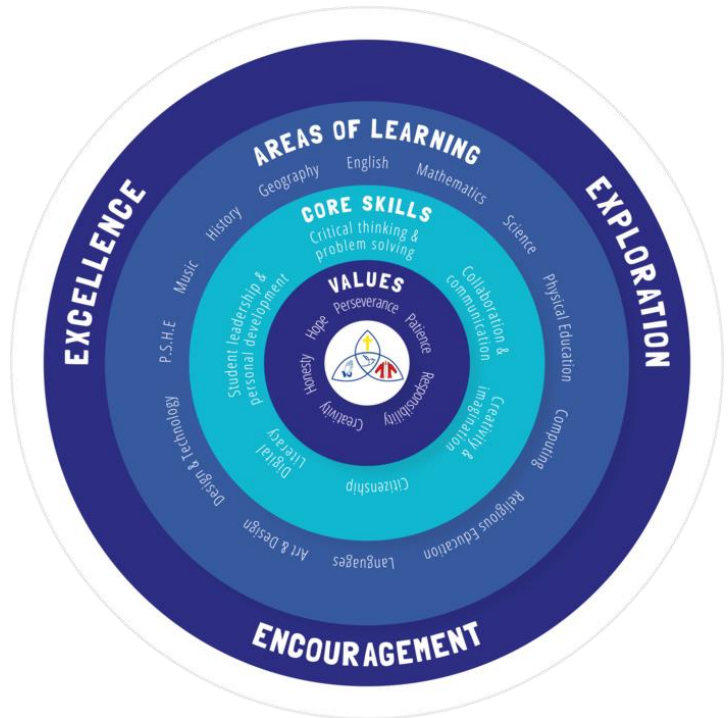
**'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for us to dwell together in unity'  
(Psalms 133:1)**

Our vision and values are theologically grounded with clear links to a Christian narrative through Bible quotes and stories. Each term reinforces the bible teaching for one of our core Christian values.

It is with this Christian vision that we shape and craft our school policies, actions and Church school development plan.

We feel that this Christian vision and our school values impacts every aspect of our school life and attendance at school. In the creation of this policy, our Christian vision and values are in practice as we work together, in unity, to support children's attendance at school.

At St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that parents make sure that their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how, in unity, we will achieve this.



### **1.1 ATTENDANCE LEGISLATION**

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parent responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

If a child of compulsory age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and can be served with a penalty notice by an authorised officer, which includes the Headteacher of St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School. Full payment of the penalty discharges the parent from liability for conviction following a prosecution. The payment is made to Lincolnshire County Council.

Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite for pupil achievement. Absence whether it is long term, frequent or occasional leads to missed experiences and may cause fractured social relationships which encourage an increased pattern of non-attendance.

St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School constantly monitors and evaluates the progress each of our pupils make. The school works in partnership with pupils, parents and outside agencies to support families and ensure pupils make progress with their education. We recognise that pupils who are absent will miss important educational opportunities which will affect their progress.

### **2.0 DATA PROTECTION ACT**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification, which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk or harm or is in need of safeguarding.

### **3.0 AIMS**

St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School:

- seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for achieving their potential
- strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, so that each member of our community feels safe and valued
- requires staff to work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends regularly and punctually
- will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide information, advice and support
- will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of all pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality, and challenge those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality
- Carry out transition work with the pupils moving between our feeder infant schools and year 3 and before leaving for Secondary School
- Makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.

## **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 Parents**

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually (School starts at 8.50am and gates open from 8.35am)
- Contact on the **first day** of absence and **every subsequent day** giving an estimated length of absence before 9.30am
- Provide up to date contact details and inform us immediately if these change
- Contact the school at an early stage about concerns they have about their child's attendance
- Recognise that the School will be concerned when any child fails to meet the attendance target and work with us to improve their child's attendance.

### **4.2 Pupils**

- Acknowledge behaviour required out of school to ensure punctuality (ie sensible bedtime)
- Attend school regularly/punctually
- Speak to parents/staff if issues arise that may have an impact on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies.

### **4.3 Headteacher**

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Liaise with governors and EWO on a regular basis and highlight any concerns where necessary
- Make comparisons between attendance and attainment on a regular basis
- Review attendance procedures, strategies and monitoring on a regular basis to establish effectiveness.

### **4.4 Attendance Officer (Admin Assistant)**

- Input and update attendance registers with correct codes
- Contact parents to support attendance queries
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels including that of vulnerable groups
- Provide regular reports to Headteacher/Governors
- Send regular attendance breakdowns for each pupil at nominated times.

### **4.5 All School Staff**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment.
- Utilise our pastoral support team who are ELSA trained (Emotional Literacy Support and Mental Health Lead trained) and ready to begin to triage any mental health concerns related to attendance. These will then be shared on CPOMS, and with our SENDCO, who can then engage with Healthy Minds, BOSS or any other support service deemed appropriate, ensuring we make use of expert advice when needed.
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic ear to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures
- Inform the school office of absences parents inform them of directly

#### **4.6 Governors**

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review annually
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy

#### **Education Welfare Officer**

If difficulties cannot be resolved using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority. Contact may also be made with the Legal team at the Local Authority for advice on how to proceed if all other avenues have failed.

### **5 SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **5.1 Registration**

The accuracy of the attendance register is of paramount importance both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions that may be required

Start of sessions:

Morning registration is from 8:35am

Afternoon registration from 12:30pm

It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for every pupil. Every pupil must fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late. All staff have a duty of care and are responsible for safeguarding pupils. It is therefore vital that information is accurate.

Staff will update integris each session which is then checked by office staff for any missing codes or Late entries. Codes will be entered correctly using the official coding system.

All reasons for absence are recorded on a daily sheet and then the appropriate code entered into the register and then onto the Integris pupil system. This is regularly checked by the Headteacher.

#### **5.2 Lateness**

A pupil is late when they arrive after 8.50am and marked with a 'L'. If they arrive after the register is closed they must be marked as a 'U'. Pupils arriving late **must** sign in at reception. The daily sheets used when checking registers should be completed with the time child arrived to school. The Attendance officer will monitor lateness on a regular basis and send letters to parents whose children are persistently late. Pupils leaving the school during the day must be signed out by parents and signed back in on their return.

#### **5.3 Absence**

##### **First day absence**

If the school has not been notified, contact parents via telephone. Leave a message if necessary. If no answer, try again in the afternoon.

##### **Second day absence**

Same as first day absence.

### **Ten days absence**

Any pupil who has been absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer and the Safeguarding team.

The Attendance officer will send letters home at the end of each week for any unexplained absences during that week.

### **5.4 Use of data**

The efficient and speedy collection of data is essential to the development of effective. The school will use attendance data to monitor:

- Individual absence and lateness
- Patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by
  - Year groups
  - Seasonal patterns
  - Patterns and nature of unauthorised absence
  - Vulnerable groups e.g SEND, PP, Disadvantaged Pupils, FSM

All staff should be alert to changes in attendance patterns and raise any concerns with the Headteacher.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Absence is thoroughly monitored on a weekly and termly basis. Any pupils thought to be PA or likely to be PA will be closely monitored from week to week. If at the end of the half term a child's % attendance is below 90% a letter will be sent to parents informing them of attendance with a printout from the Integrus system. The school must, however, consider each PA and decide whether a letter is appropriate, e.g. if the child has had a prolonged illness etc. Cases of persistent absence may be made known the local authority attendance team.

## **6.0 UNAUTHORISED AND AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

### **6.1 Unauthorised Absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes Children at Risk of Missing Education and new pupils who have not arrived in school on the agreed admission date. These pupils are pursued through the School's procedures. Children at Risk of Missing Education can be removed from school by parents who have elected home education, have a medical condition certified by an appropriate person or hospital consultant and are unfit to attend school or pupils who have moved away but not registered at a new school (Children Missing Education November 2013).

### **6.2 Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. An authorised absence requires communication from the parent/carer. Any pupil whose parent does not provide a reason for absence will be deemed to have been absent without a proven reason and the absence recorded as unauthorised.

Absences are only allowed for specific reasons. These include situations where your child:	Children are not allowed to be absent because of, for example:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is ill.</li> <li>• has an <b>unavoidable</b> medical or dental appointment.</li> <li>• is taking part in a religious event.</li> <li>• requires absence due to <b>exceptional circumstances*</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holiday without exceptional reason.</li> <li>• birthdays.</li> <li>• visiting relatives.</li> <li>• shopping.</li> </ul>

\* Exceptional circumstances. School Attendance statutory guidance and departmental advice, August 2013 stipulated that:

*“Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling”*

The Headteacher will use the following criteria when considering exceptional circumstances:

- The reason for absence, which must be considered to be exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances must be unique or one-off situations and proof may be required in such circumstances.
- Whether parents give advance notice.
- The child’s attendance record and percentage of absences.
- The child’s level of attainment, progress and ability to catch up on missed schooling.
- The time of year proposed.

**General/regular family holidays during term time cannot be approved.** Only exceptional circumstances will be considered.

Each request for absence is considered separately using the criteria above. As the Headteacher is required to consider each request as unique, any individual decision cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the School in the past, and nor does it set a precedent.

Any request for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be well in advance and in the form of a letter. Parents can request a meeting as well. Requests cannot be made via a form.

**The Governing Body has decided that the decision of the Headteacher is final.** Parents can make a complaint to the Governing Body, if they feel their request has not been dealt with fairly. Parents should request a copy of the Complaints Policy for more information.

**6.3 Unauthorised Absence** (if a request for exceptional circumstances is not authorised and parents proceed with taking their child out of school during term time)

A Fixed Penalty Warning Letter may be sent by the Education Welfare Officer to **both** parents per child. For example, if three children are absent this equates to six letters and the possibility of six penalty notices.

If parents choose to ignore a letter of warning and go ahead with the holiday during term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority for the period of absence under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 place upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parents fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under section 444 of the education Act.
- In classes where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. £120 per parent, per child if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. The local authority may take forward any prosecutions for non-payment.

This will apply to any parent whose child is of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who is registered at a state school. ***(Each case will be examined by the Headteacher and will decide whether or not to proceed with this course of action, however, parents must be aware that the school are within their rights to pursue this course of action).***

#### **6.4 Medical Absence**

The School recognises that a small number of pupils may be absent due to medical conditions. The School will work with parents to enable pupils to attend school. This may include an individual care plan, advice from external agencies and transition arrangements.

#### **6.5 Absence below 90%:**

The School continuously monitors attendance. The following procedures and actions will be adhered to:

- Weekly printout to be obtained from Integris for attendance below 90%
- Comparisons made throughout the half term and any concerns are communicated to parents
- Half termly review of attendance. Overall attendance figures monitored and previous weekly monitoring examined. Letters sent to parents of pupils with an attendance figure of below 90%
- Action plans outlining targets drawn up and meetings with parents requested if necessary. Targets monitored closely.
- Close monitoring on PA pupils and those at risk of becoming PA
- Weekly reports to Headteacher particularly for vulnerable groups

#### **7.0 ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS**

Attendance is encouraged by good practice and rewards:

- Weekly gold and silver awards presented in assembly for classes with the best attendance
- Class gold certificate for the best attendance for the academic year.
- Individual Gold certificates for 97% attendance on a termly basis.
- Individual Gold certificates for 100% attendance for the academic year.
- Record of good attendance on individual School Reports.



## 8.0 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed and approved annually by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

### ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

