

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

At St Francis of Assisi, we believe God is at the heart of our school. As a school community, we work together to provide a caring, stimulating and nurturing environment, where every child can discover their true potential and grow closer to Christ. As pupils and staff we encourage in each other a love of learning. This is a place where we can all belong and where diversity and difference is celebrated. We rejoice in each others' uniqueness and respect the dignity and beauty of each individual. Using our gifts and talents we will actively seek to make a real difference - by caring for one another and caring for our world.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Document Purpose

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of St. Francis School, in relation to the attendance of our pupils and all staff.

The Governing Body accepts this principle and seeks to create an environment in the school which encourages and reinforces good attendance.

Leave of Absence

Absence from learning has been proved adversely to affect children's progress.

Schools cannot authorise absence except in **exceptional and unavoidable** circumstances.

- Days of religious observance will be authorised
- Medical appointments will be authorised if they cannot be arranged outside the school day.
- Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised.

There is **no legal entitlement to holidays** during term time and this should be avoided. It will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence and after five days, a fixed penalty notice and fine will be issued by the local authority.

Parents/carers must clearly state why they consider it essential for their child to be off school. In **very exceptional** circumstances, pupils could be granted twenty days unauthorised absence. After that, pupils may be removed from the roll. On return, parents/carers will need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North). A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Prior attendance records will be taken into account.

Attendance

To enable children to reach their full potential and for us to achieve our aims for them it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually. All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% attendance, so all will be done to try to help each pupil achieve at least this attendance level.

It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents/carers, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance. Registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously, at the beginning of both the morning and

afternoon sessions. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and all instructions listed in the front of the register will be adhered to.

The school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible (on the day of absence) if a child is absent for the day, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that morning. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.

If your son/daughter has not returned to school within three days, you will receive a courtesy phonecall from the school. At this point, if there is likely to be continued absence, you will be expected to confirm in writing the reason for your child's absence and the expected day of return.

It is the parents/carers' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance. If attendance is persistently unsatisfactory, the school will liaise with the parent verbally and /or by letter. If the situation does not improve i.e. the child's unauthorised absences build up to 12.5 days, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in a child's attendance being monitored, the parents/carers being visited and appropriate strategies put in place to help improve attendance. A flow chart outlines the protocols and procedures for this and is attached to the policy. Should a child's attendance not improve the parent/carer could be brought before the magistrates' court under the 1996 Education Act. Alternatively an Education Supervision Order could be sought in the family proceedings court under the 1989 Children Act. Parents/carers/carers should be aware that unauthorised absence of five consecutive days will lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice. In the case of absence due to holiday, the fixed penalty notice will be issued immediately after five consecutive days absence, without a warning first.

All absences will be either authorised or unauthorised. Days of religious observance will be authorised, as will medical appointments. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised, for example it is not acceptable for children to be absent from school due to tiredness or their birthday.

A form obtained from the school office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested (see Appendix A). A child's absence record will be taken into account when considering requests for withdrawal from learning and authorisation will not be given to children with less than 95% attendance. A standard letter may be sent to families informing them of a fixed penalty notice.

Good school attendance will be recognised and children with 100% attendance at the end of the year will be awarded a special certificate in assembly. If your child's attendance is above 95% you will receive a green attendance certificate at parent

consultation evening in the Autumn and Spring term and with the annual report to parents/carers in the Summer term. If your child's attendance is between 90% and 95% the certificate will be amber and below 90% attendance, red.

If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence, for example due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.

Punctuality

It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. This instils a good work ethic in the child, which can last a lifetime. When a child is late it disrupts the working day for both the teacher and the other children in their class and can cause unnecessary embarrassment to the child. It is also important for a child's socialisation that they are present to interact with their peers at the start of the day.

If a child is late, they should report to the school office where they are entered into the late book, thereby obtaining their presence mark and ensuring that in case of emergency the school is aware of their presence on site. The times after which a child is marked late or absent are given in the school prospectus but children are marked late if they arrive between 9.00 and 9.30am and as an unauthorised absence after 9.30am. If a child needs to leave school for an appointment during school hours they must be booked out at the office. If they return to school they will book back into school at the school office. Parents/carers/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

The school staff will be receptive to any parent/carer who has a problem in getting their child into school. It is most important that parents/carers discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Head teacher so that appropriate help can be offered. St Francis School provides a broad, balanced curriculum but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually.

Effective from: July 2018

Date of review : July 2019

Appendix A

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

Name of Child:

Class:

First day of absence:

Date of return to school:

Reasons for seeking absence during school time:

Signed:

Date:

NB:

- **Absence not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised'**
- There are not exceptional circumstances for this request for absence.
- The policy for attendance states that no requests for absence may be granted in the first two weeks of the Autumn term.
- The policy for attendance states that no requests for absence may be granted during the second half of the Spring term.
- The policy for attendance states that no requests for absence may be granted in the during the first half of the Summer term.
- Your child's absence is already below % and causing concern.

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Previous days authorised absence:

Previous days holiday:

Previous days sickness:

Number of days authorised:

Number of days unauthorised:

CRAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

Child's Name:

Dates requested as absence from learning:

Has been authorised

Has not been authorised

SIGNED: