ST NICHOLAS' PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025/2026

Introduction

St Nicholas' Primary and Nursery School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C, I, M, B, P, J, R), unauthorised (O, G) or as an approved educational activity (V, W) (attendance out of school). These codes are available on www.gov.uk as approved by the Government.
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45 am – 8.50 am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes.

2. In line with safeguarding procedures any pupil arriving after 9.30am (will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed (L). Children arriving after 8.45am must report to the School Office. The office will record any late arrivals and update the register accordingly.

3. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

4. The afternoon registration will be at 1.15 pm

5. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before

registers close. The school monitors regular lateness and will be in contact with parents whose children are regularly late for school.

6. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before (before 9am) the first day. This should be for every day of absence unless a doctor's note has specified a particular period of absence.

7. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Please notify the school if these appointments must be made in school hours. In some circumstances, medical and/dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

8. The school expects pupils to arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day. The school records a late list and are alert to patterns of late arrivals. Parents will be informed if punctuality is a concern and reminded of their parental responsibilities and the potential damage caused by lateness.

9. If pupils are late due to exceptional circumstances, no action will be taken. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, the school may keep the register open for a little longer. However, if pupils are frequently late with the same or similar explanation, the School Home Link Worker will speak to the parents to identify any issues. If the pupil arrives late 30 minutes after the register has closed with no authorised reason the school will enter the 'U' unauthorised code.

10. For health and safety, and safeguarding reasons, the school needs to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. In these circumstances, pupils will be required to sign in and out as they come and go, to record a pupil has left during the session.

Absence from School

First Day Absence

School System for responding to a child's first day of absence is as follows: -

1. Parents must contact the school on or before the first day of absence by 9.00am. They can leave a message on the school answer machine 01865 242 838 or email the school office admin.2352@stnicholasprimaryschool.org.uk. Parents must explain reason for absence. Parents must contact the office each day the child is absent from school.

2. If there is no contact by the parent/carer by 9.30 am, on the first day of absence, then the school office will telephone the named contact on the child's registration form. Failed attempts will be recorded and the office will highlight the absence to the safeguarding team, which includes the home-school link worker and head teacher, who may visit the home if there is any cause for concern, based on previous information

3. Attendance is recorded on formal class registers using the Arbor Software System and is taken by the teachers at registration between 8.45am – 8.50 am and afternoon registration at 1.15pm. Children not present will be marked with an N

4. The school office will run an ‘N’ report straight after registration period to identify school absences promptly.

5. The School office records lates and absence messages on a daily list in the office the administrators will update the correct code on the pupils’ attendance record.

6. If no reason has been provided for the absence when the pupil returns to the school, then the office will send a follow up with a letter requesting the for reason for absence in writing. If still no reason has been provided, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. There will be input from the safeguarding team if necessary.

Third Day Absence

1. If a child is absent for a third consecutive day, parents/carers must telephone the school and provide information on the child’s anticipated return.

2. If there is still no contact by parent/carer, the school will telephone the first named contact on the child’s registration form, followed by the other named contact.

3. If there is still no contact with the parents/carers, then the school may visit the home address or contact the police if there are safeguarding concerns.

4. The school will send a letter to home requesting a reason for the absence and requesting for the parents/carers to contact the school as soon as possible.

Pupil Missing

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 10 consecutive school days with the school unable to make contact with the family, must be referred to the Early Intervention Hub or the police to conduct a home visit.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the School Attendance Administrator and Home Link Worker to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns to the headteacher, or deputy headteacher in her absence.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher (or Home Link Worker) will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified. The school keeps detailed records of interventions and the impact of these.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her/they to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his/her/they age, ability and aptitude and
[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. A meeting with the head teacher is arranged in order to offer support at this stage. 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.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine as determined by the Local Authority per parent and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Leave of Absence

The Head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Head teacher by completing a leave of absence form obtained from the school office and they will attend an interview with the head teacher **one month prior to the leave** of absence period in question.

Applications for holidays during term time will not be granted.

The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution. (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Support for Attendance

Attendance will be encouraged in a number of ways:

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance: -

- The school celebrates attendance whole class attendance in the weekly celebration assembly and the class with the highest percentage will receive a class certificate and get to look after 'Attendance Ted' for the week .

- Children who have 100% attendance for the whole year will receive an attendance Award at the end of the school year.

- If necessary parents will be sent an attendance award to encourage and reward and improvement attendance and good attendance.

- The school will contact parents when low attendance has been identified and parents will be asked to come in for an attendance interview with the head teacher to see how attendance can be improved.

- At the end of the school year parents are sent attendance reports.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school's target for 2025-2026 academic year is - **96%**

The School will ensure:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a good reason. Parents will be telephoned by the school
- All staff members will contribute to improving attendance and take ownership of attendance as a whole school responsibility in a positive manner
- Regular monitoring of attendance by the senior leadership team
- A referral of specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate
- School assemblies are used to reinforce the value of education and the need of regular school attendance and punctuality
- Good attendance and punctuality promoted in the Early Years coffee mornings and foundation stage.
- Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including newsletters and end of term reports.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

[1] Unauthorised Absence;
[2] Authorised Absence;
[3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence
This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

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.

3. Approved Educational Activity
This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This policy has been approved by:

Headteacher: .....

Chair of Governors: .....

Date: .....

Date to be reviewed: .....