**Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**2017-2019**

**Values**

St Catherine’s is committed, through its Mission Statement, to creating a learning environment which encourages and supports high levels of achievement for all pupils. An essential part of striving for excellence is achieved through regular attendance and punctuality. In addition to learning valuable life skills, pupils absent from school miss out on important teaching and learning that can never be retrieved. Therefore, we expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved and are proactive in challenging poor attendance and punctuality.

**Department for Education (DfE) Guidance**

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’. **School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2016**

**Expectations**

All members of our school community must strive to create a culture in which students come to school every day (without question), to enjoy their schooling and leave with a sense of achievement.

At St. Catherine’s, our minimum expectations are:

* Attendance is 97.5%
* Punctuality 97.5%

However, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

**Overall Aims:**

• To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.

• To ensure the school attendance target is achieved through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

• To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.

• To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive termly communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

• To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.

• To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.

**Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality**

**There are legal obligations on:**

• Parents to secure education for their child(ren) and to send them to school.

• The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.

**Head Teacher:**

• To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of this policy.

• To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Hertfordshire Education Authority policies and procedures.

• To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Hertfordshire Education Authority policies and procedures.

**Deputy Head Teacher:**

• To take responsibility for attendance and punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.

• To oversee the analysis of half-termly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.

• To liaise with external agencies such as the Attendance Improvement Officer and make referrals, where necessary.

• To write to parents to inform them when their child’s attendance is below 96%.

• To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.

• To work with the teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.

• To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Attendance Improvement Officer.

• To revise and amend this policy, as required.

**Office Staff:**

• To record reasons for absence and update class registers on SIMs, when informed.

• To check the school phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.

• To promptly inform the DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.

• To implement the daily checking of registers after morning and afternoon registration.

• To report to the Local Authority, as requested by DHT.

• To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

**Class teacher:**

• Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on SIMs at 8.55am and 1.15pm.

• To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance/punctuality through SIMs.

• To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are obtained and filed.

• To provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

• To establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child’s needs.

• If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties.

• Along with the DHT, work with pupils and their families when attendance is a concern and work to overcome barriers to good attendance.

• To promptly inform the DHT of pupils who persist with poor attendance/punctuality.

• To feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality concerns at Parents’ Consultations & in yearly reports.

**Parents:**

If a child has a minor illness (e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc.), parents should bring them in to school and inform the school office who will pass on the information to the relevant staff to monitor during the day. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents must do the following:

1. Contact the school first thing in the morning (and any subsequent mornings) and state the exact reason why. This should be done by sending a text to 07887 422516.
2. Upon return to school, send in a letter to cover all absences, again explaining precise reason for absence. This must be dated and signed.

Note: Both steps must be completed.

**Appointments**

If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know a week in advance.

Parents should bring their child to school before/after appointments (as appropriate).

**Therefore, parents are expected to:**

• Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.

• Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.

• Wherever possible, avoid medical and dental appointments in school time.

• Text the school on the first day (and on each continuous) of their child’s absence. We may call you to ask for additional information.

• Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.

Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

* St Catherine of Siena Primary School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.
* The headteacher and appropriate staff meet with the AIO for regular meetings to discuss and review attendance.
* The school and the AIO work with identified individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance.
* When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the

AIO, the school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, invite you to a meeting to offer support or may make a formal referral to the Local Authority.

**Fixed Penalty Notices**

A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil’s absence must have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term.

**Penalty notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60, if paid within 21 days, or £120, if paid within 28 days**.

Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority

**Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

**Aims:**

• To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97.5%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.

• To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97.5%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

**Weekly Celebration Assemblies**

Achievement Assemblies are held every week on Friday. The class with the highest attendance/punctuality receive ‘Golden Time’.

**Attendance Rewards**

At the end of each half term, children who have achieved 100% attendance will receive an attendance certificate signed by the HT and DHT.

**Attendance Certificate**

Only pupils achieving 100% attendance and 5 lates or less for the whole school year, are eligible for the end of year reward.

All of the rewards and certificates are awarded at the discretion of the Headteacher.

**Sharing attendance data**

The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 100% attendance for the term are shared in termly assemblies and newsletters.

**Parent consultation evenings**

This provides an opportunity for teachers to share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary, a target for improving attendance is set.

**Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

**Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using SIMs. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

**Morning Register**

Class registers are open from 8:45am until 8.55am. At that point, the teacher submits their final register. After this, children must sign in at the office. If a child arrives after 9.10am, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Phone calls will be made to parents/guardians at 9.15am if:

1. a child is not in school by 9.15am
2. and the school has not been made aware of a reason for the absence.

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may keep registers open for longer.

**Afternoon Register**

Registers must be submitted by staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. This should be done by 1:20pm

**School Attendance Letters**

The school may send out letters, to communicate with parents and request reasons for attendance and punctuality.

**IMPORTANT:**

**Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.**

• The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The precise absence reason is recorded.

• When a letter is received containing the reason for absence, this will be signed and dated by the member of staff who received the letter. This will then be scanned into SIMs and attached to the child’s name. The letter will be returned to the parent.

• The class teacher must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an ‘N’ (no reason given) code. If the CT has not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the absence is recorded as ‘O’ (unauthorised).

**Extended Holidays**

In line with Hertfordshire Local Authority, ‘Leave in term Time Guidance’ and the 2016 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

• death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil

• life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil and

• parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

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

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

**Approved by: Governing Body**

**Approved Date: June 2017**

**Review Date: June 2019**