



## Cluster Attendance Policy

Formally adopted by the Cluster Governing Body of:	The West Norfolk CLuster
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Chair of Cluster Governors:	
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Adopted by The St Mary Federation Date: 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Signed:
Executive Headteacher – Sarah Bocking	Chair of Committee - John Ward

## The West Norfolk Cluster Attendance Policy

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# The West Norfolk Cluster

## Statement of intent

The West Norfolk Cluster believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

The West Norfolk Cluster is committed to:

- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

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

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.



## 1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Education Act 1996
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
  - Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
  - Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - DfE (2016) 'School attendance'
  - DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- 1.3. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Complaints Procedures Policy
  - Positive Behaviour Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures
- 2.2. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 2.4. The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of each school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 2.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.9. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.



## 3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- “Absence” as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
  
- An “authorised absence” as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency.
  
- An “unauthorised absence” as:
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  
- “Persistent absenteeism” as:
  - Missing **15%** or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

## 4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.



## 5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, **96%** throughout the year.

## 6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 6.2. Parents are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns with a signed explanation of why they were absent; this is required even if the parent has already contacted the school via phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer.
- 6.6. If a pupil's attendance drops below **85%**, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.

## 7. Contact information

- 7.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

## 8. Attendance officer

- 8.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- 8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.



## 9. Lateness

- 9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. Pupil must be in classes by the following times every day, where the teacher will record that they are in school:

Brancaster – 9.00am to 9.05am and 1:00pm

Docking – 8.55am to 9.10am and 1.00pm to 1.05pm

Sedgeford – 8.55am to 9.00am and 1.00pm

- 9.2. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## 10. Term-time leave

- 10.1. At West Norfolk Cluster of Schools, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 10.2. The Executive Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 10.3. The Executive Headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Executive Headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 10.4. The Executive Headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher.
- 10.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 10.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10%** for any reason
- 10.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Executive Headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.



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## 11. Truancy

- 11.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 11.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by the designated times, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 11.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
- 11.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 11.6. If truancy is suspected, the Executive Headteacher is notified, who will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 11.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
  - In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
  - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
  - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.



## 12. Missing children

- 12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Executive Headteacher.
- 12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Executive Headteacher immediately.
  - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Executive Headteacher.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
  - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
  - If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
  - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 12.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 12.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 12.5. The Executive Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils and understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 12.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.



- 12.7. The Executive Headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 12.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Primary Behavioural Policy.
- 12.9. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

### 13. Religious observances

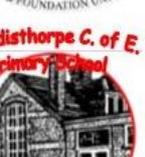
- 13.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 13.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### 14. Appointments

- 14.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 14.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 14.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 14.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

### 15. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

- 15.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- 15.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the pupil's home LA.
- 15.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.



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- 15.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
  - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 15.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.
- 15.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- 15.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- 15.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- 15.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
- For not less than six hours a week; and
  - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
  - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
  - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 15.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- 15.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 15.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 15.13. The Executive Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96%**



- 15.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Executive Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 15.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 15.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 15.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 15.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- 15.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 15.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
  - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
  - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 15.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 15.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 15.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

## 16. Young carers

- 16.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 16.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 16.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.



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## 17. Monitoring and review

- 17.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 17.2. St Mary Federation's attendance target is **96%**.
- 17.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
- 17.4. This policy is reviewed every three years by the cluster headteachers; the next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2020. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.



## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St Mary Federation has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the Executive Headteacher and data lead and family support worker detailing weekly and annual attendance to date by the attendance officer.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils record their attendance in their care and guidance folders. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Executive Headteacher/data lead.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to **96%**, the attendance officer speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attend a family support worker also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **96%**, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90%**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the family support worker contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **96%**.

If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice

## HOLIDAYS IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be liable for a minimum of £60 Penalty Notice per parent per child.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

**If your child's attendance falls below 95%, a meeting may be arranged with the school nurse and the education welfare officer in order to discuss your child's health etc.**

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child.</p> <p>However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term-time.</p> <p>However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave of no more than ten days in total in any year.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>
<p>Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Genuine illness</li> <li>♣ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li> <li>♣ Days of religious observance</li> <li>♣ Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement</li> <li>♣ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>♣ External examinations</li> <li>♣ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li> </ul>	<p>Other absence from school will not be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ For any type of shopping</li> <li>♣ Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents</li> <li>♣ Minding the house</li> <li>♣ Birthdays</li> <li>♣ Resting after a late night</li> <li>♣ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>♣ Cheap holidays</li> </ul>