

All Saints' CEVCP School



Attendance Policy

Inspire Challenge Succeed

“At our Church of England School our vision is that all children leave All Saints’ as confident, resilient and reflective individuals, with a lifelong love of learning and a curiosity and respect for the world around them.”

“In everything, treat others the same way that you want them to treat you” – Matthew 7:12

Review Frequency	Every 3 years (See Section 6)	Approval Level Required	Full GB
Approved by:	Full GB	Approval Date:	12 th October 2022
Signed:		Print Name:	Katie Haselhurst Chair of Governors

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Saints’ CEVC Primary School (All Saints’) is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.
- 1.2 There is clear evidence of a link between good attendance at school and high levels of attainment. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- 1.3 Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school and we will make every effort to support them to achieve this.
- 1.4 All staff at All Saints’ CEVC Primary have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. Staff will work together to provide an environment and culture in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5 We understand the importance of building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- 1.6 At All Saints’, we recognise that poor or uneven attendance can be a sign of wider issues in the lives of the children concerned and as such, our attendance monitoring procedures are interlinked with those for child protection and safeguarding.
- 1.7 This policy is based on current government, local authority guidance and statutory regulations (see Section 7). The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

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What does an attendance percentage mean?

99% - 100%	We consider attendance to be excellent.
98%	We consider attendance to be very good.
96% - 97%	We consider attendance to be good.
95%	We consider attendance to be satisfactory.
94% and below	Attendance requires improvement and interventions will be made to support this.
90% and below	Attendance is inadequate and will be discussed and closely monitored by the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). This may result in the sanctions outlined later in this policy.

2. School Procedures

2.1 Registration

- i) The school is required by law to maintain an attendance register. It is marked twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the codes detailed in Appendix 1.
- ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55am** and **1.05pm (for Reception and KS1) and 1.20pm (for KS2.)** The register will be called by the class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The register will close at **9.00am** and **1.10pm (for Reception and KS1) and 1.25pm (for KS2.)** Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be counted as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness found in Section 2.5.

2.2 Categorising Absence

- i) The attendance register will be marked to show whether every pupil is:
 - Present
 - Attending an off-site approved educational activity
 - Absent
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- ii) A child who is not present during registration will be categorised as 'unauthorised absence' unless leave has been authorised by the school in advance or where a reason for absence is known and is accepted by the school as legitimate.
- iii) Where a reason for absence is given to the school at a later stage, the register will be amended (if required) so that the original entry and the amendment are distinguishable along with the reason for the amendment, the date it was made and who made it.
- iv) Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activity, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.3 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

- i) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance where:
 - a pupil is to be educated off site, for example to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is participating in an educational trip or visit authorised by the school,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special event/occasion and permission has been granted by the Headteacher in advance. In authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case will be considered.
 - (b) in other **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted by the Headteacher for absence and where the parents/carers with whom the child normally resides have sought permission in advance.
 - (c) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
 - (d) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand)
 - (e) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
 - (f) where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong;
 - (g) where the Local Authority have a duty to make travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty;
 - (h) where the pupil is of no fixed abode, their parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required them to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (i) where the pupil has been excluded from the school and no alternative provision has been made;
 - (j) in other **very exceptional circumstances** where a request could not have been made in advance (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.
- ii) A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- iii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
 - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
 - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.
 - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

- iv) Where the school receives information from other sources that contradicts a parent's original reason for absence and indicates that a family holiday has been taken without following the correct procedures, a discrepancy letter may be issued. This letter will seek to confirm the reason for absence and may request evidence to support it. Where it transpires that a holiday had been taken without following the correct procedures then a penalty notice will be issued in accordance with the relevant sections of this policy.

2.4 Lateness and punctuality

- i) Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. If they arrive late it is both very disruptive to their own education and to that of others within their class. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon).
- ii) This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Reasons such as missing the bus, issues with finding a parking space or lost shoes will **not** be classed as a legitimate reason.
- iii) A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

2.5 Arriving Late or Leaving Early

- i) For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building at any time. Pupils arriving late should therefore *report to the school office to allow staff to register pupils and ascertain their lunchtime requirements*. **It is VITALLY important that all pupils & parents/carers arriving late follow this procedure**
- ii) Pupils who arrive late but before the register closes must report to the school office where their parents/carers must sign the pupil book and record the reason for their lateness.
- iii) For the same reason it is vitally important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) and/or returning to school later in the day complete the required information in the pupil book held in the school office.

2.6 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term-time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

- i) Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on the appropriate form (see Appendix 2) by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Any further evidence supporting the application may be attached to the form. The application must be made four weeks in advance of the intended absence. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval therefore if parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. All requests will be considered on an individual basis.
- ii) The school will **consider** authorising absences for:
- Parents/carers in the armed forces returning from an overseas placement;
 - Parents/carers who are employed by the public services such as Police, Fire and Health whose holiday is rostered and changes are unable to be made;

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- Parents/carers who are employed and subject to a strict and un-negotiable annual leave rota and where evidence is provided from a Senior Manager of the Company to this effect;
 - Cultural issues for families returning to their homeland;
 - Weddings of an immediate family member – for the journey out and return plus a day for the ceremony (3 days);
 - Any other family circumstances that the Headteacher believes would necessitate a holiday in term time for the benefit of the whole family.
- iii) Parents/carers who are self-employed will be assessed on an individual basis according to the nature of the self-employment.
- iv) Requests for time off for the following reasons will **not** be authorised:
- Cheaper cost of a holiday
 - Availability of the desired accommodation for a holiday
 - Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
 - Absent parent/grandparent taking the child on holiday
 - A prolonged holiday overlapping with the beginning or end of term
 - Holidays received as a gift

This list is not exhaustive.

- v) The school will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving their decision as to whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.
- vi) All Saints' CEVC Primary School will NOT authorise time off school during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations.

2.7 Legal Sanctions

The school will follow the Local Authority's guidance on issuing sanctions and has agreed to align expectations with other institutions in the Bury School's Partnership in order to make things clearer for parents and carers.

- i) Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their children from school where children are of compulsory school age. This fine will take the form of a Penalty Notice.
- ii) An immediate fixed penalty notice will be issued when eight or more unauthorised absence sessions have occurred (four whole days in total). The school will give a reminder/warning about attendance when six sessions (three whole days in total) have been recorded and then expect to see no further unauthorised absences.
- iii) If issued with a Penalty Notice, **each** parents/carer must pay £60 within 21 days for **each** child. For example, two children with two parents/carers would amount to a £240 fine. The fine increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay after this period may result in prosecution.
- iv) If a fixed penalty notice has previously been issued to parents and carers, any further unauthorised holiday will be referred to the Local Authority for prosecution.

3. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 3.1 Attendance is given a very high profile at All Saints' and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class.
- 3.2 The school will celebrate and reward excellent or improved attendance.
- 3.3 Parents and carers will be regularly reminded about the importance of attendance in newsletters and parent forums.
- 3.4 This Attendance Policy will be shared with parents as required and will be available on the school website.
- 3.5 The school will contact parents where there is a concern regarding the level of attendance or lateness. This may result in support to improve as well as challenging the need and reasons.

4 Day to Day processes for managing attendance:

- 4.1 We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This information will give information about the amount of time missed and impact on pupil's learning.
- 4.2 Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who the school consider to be vulnerable or are persistently/ severely absent to discuss attendance and engage at school.
- 4.3 Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- 4.4 Make the necessary statutory data returns to the LA.
- 4.5 Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

Systems for managing absence and ensuring that children are safe include:

First-day calling

All Saints' CEVC Primary School has a system of 'first-day calling' in place. This means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent where no explanation for the absence has been received. This phone call will be made by 10.15am. The system helps to identify, at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parent's/carer's knowledge. Where it is not possible to make direct contact with parents/carers a message will be left on the parents/carers telephone(s). If contact has not been made with the parents/carers by the end of the week, or earlier if there are reasons for concern, a letter will be sent home asking the parents/carers to contact the school immediately.

Meetings with parents/carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence or where staff are particularly concerned the school will contact parents/carers to notify them of their concerns. A meeting may then be arranged to discuss the reasons for the absences. At the meeting plans should be put in place with the parents/carers and the pupil to resolve any difficulties, to provide appropriate support and to improve the attendance within a specified time limit. This would usually be no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If unauthorised absences continue following this time limit (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all) the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer

Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour means that the pupil will be potentially vulnerable to harm and will also not be receiving a full-time education. All Saints' CEVC Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that it does not happen. If, however a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents/carers immediately, inform the local police and establish a search team to locate the pupil.

5. Collection and analysis of data

- 5.1 The Business Manager monitors attendance and late marks daily, highlighting immediate concerns to the Headteacher as required. Weekly reports are then produced for Headteacher detailing where children have reached thresholds that may require further action and any improving/declining trends.
- 5.2 Weekly class attendance totals are shared in school newsletters for children and parents, building an awareness of the importance of attendance
- 5.3 Termly attendance monitoring takes place for each child with a letter sent home detailing the percentage of attendance and highlighting how this is classified:
- 5.4 Letters are sent to parents where attendance levels fall below 90% and if attendance does not improve then a meeting will take place with the Headteacher
- 5.5 This data is presented at liaison meetings with the Education Welfare Officer to identify those parents who will be issued with a warning letter.
- 5.6 Attendance data is shared at termly Learning and Achievement Committee meetings and forms part of the Headteacher's Reports for Governors.
- 5.7 Accurate attendance returns will be made to the Department for Education within the stipulated time frame
- 5.8 Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- 5.9 Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- 5.10 The school will keep the attendance register for three years after the date on which the last entry was made.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- monitoring attendance and punctuality figures for the whole school and comparing them

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- to local and national data in order to understand any particular issues facing All Saints'
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- making sure staff receive adequate training for attendance
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

The detail of this work will be carried out termly in the Learning and Achievement Committee with headline figures reported to the following Full Governing Body meeting. Although it is not mandatory, the governing body has decided that this policy should be approved by the Full Governing Body in order to highlight the importance of attendance and their support for the Headteacher in dealing with it.

The governing body will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation and review of the policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead the school's work in promoting excellent attendance ensuring that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school
- Ensure that up-to-date attendance data and attendance issues are highlighted when an identified point is reached or earlier where there are other concerns in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure that support is put in place for families and children to deal with any attendance issues
- Meet with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer/ School Attendance Support Officer and share information with them regarding any concerns about a pupil's attendance
- Make information and reports on attendance readily available to staff and parents/carers
- provide termly attendance figures to the Governing Body
- Ensure that all staff responsible for recording and monitoring attendance have the appropriate training
- Ensure that attendance figures required by external bodies are sent off within the relevant timescales.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Clare Lamb and can be contacted head@allsaintsprimary.org

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers/ school attendance support officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Claire Hood and can be contacted office@allsaintsprimary.org

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for completing attendance registers twice daily, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

The School Business Manager (SBM)

The SBM will:

- Scrutinise attendance data daily as registers are returned from classes, identifying any immediate action that needs to be taken and escalating as required
- Collect and record messages from parents regarding absence and lateness
- Initiate first day calling as necessary and taking appropriate action resulting from it
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Provide weekly reports to the Headteacher on absence and lateness highlighting where thresholds have been met
- Maintain the school's electronic recording systems for attendance
- Submit relevant attendance data to external bodies as directed by the Headteacher.

Parents/Carers

The prime responsibility for ensuring that children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child.) Parents/carers will be supported and encouraged by the school to achieve this.

All Saints' CEVC Primary School expects parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their child attends the school every day the school is open to pupils
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Understand that the school are unable to automatically agree requests for absence
- Not condone unjustified absence from school
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities.

In relation to absence parents will also be expected to:

- Notify the School on every day of their child's absence using the dedicated absence line on 01284 828223. This phone call should be made by 9.30am; and parents should in contact school each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide written confirmation of periods of absence and the reason for the absence on their child's return to school if requested by the school. Where this notification is not received the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Pupils

- Pupils should attend all of their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school, they should give their class teacher a note from their parents/carers to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.
- All pupils should be aware of the importance of attending the school every day the school is available. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

7. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy every three years or sooner if:

- There are changes to Department for Education guidance or legislation
- The Local Authority updates its procedures for managing absence.
- Absence monitoring indicates that policy changes may be required to make it more effective.

The Headteacher will draft changes to the policy and present them to the Full Governing Body for approval.

8. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

9. Links to Other Policies

This policy is linked to the school's

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Evacuation Procedures.

10. Conclusion

Excellent school attendance contributes to the health and safety of children and supports them in reaching their maximum potential. Being a member of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute and to be responsible for the well-being of others. Excellent school attendance supports engagement in ongoing education and employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life.

Appendix 1 – Register Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence (Exceptional Circumstances)
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (requested in advance) not authorised by the Headteacher	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday (requested in advance) authorised by the Headteacher	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence – Code should be amended when the reason emerges or replaced with O, if no reason is provided after a reasonable amount of time.
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

All Saints' CEVC Primary School



Application for Leave of Absence during term time.

Please note all applications MUST be made at least 4 weeks in advance.

Any supporting evidence MUST be attached to this form.

Before completing this form please read the school's Attendance Policy on the website (allsaintsprimary.org) for further information on holidays in term time, unauthorised absence and Fixed Penalty Notices.

Child's Name:	
Child's Class:	

I would like to apply for a leave of absence for my child from:
..... (Date)

The reason(s) for this request are:

I am / am not (please delete as applicable) attaching further evidence in support of this application.

Should this leave of absence be granted my child would return to school
on..... (Date)

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Details of Siblings:

If you have other children currently attending school please complete their details below.

Child's Name	Child's Age	Name of Child's School

I understand that:

- The Headteacher will consider this application based solely on the information provided on this form and on any further information that I have attached.
- I may be requested to provide further information to the school.
- I will be notified in writing whether this proposed absence would be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on my child's attendance record.

I confirm that I am the parent / carer of the child detailed above and that my child normally resides with me.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:



Attendance: A Guide for Parents/Carers

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should arrive at school in good time for registration. The morning register is called promptly at 8.55am and the afternoon register is taken at 1.05pm (for, Reception, and KS1 pupils) and at 1.20pm (for KS2 pupils). Children may come into their designated gate/door from 8.45am onwards. External doors and the side gate are closed promptly at 8.55am. If your child arrives after that time, they **must** enter school via the main entrance and follow the procedure below.

What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrives between 8.55 am and 9.05 am, he/she will be marked late.
- If your child arrives after 9.05 am, he/she will be marked as absent. This will be classified as unauthorised, unless an acceptable reason is given.
- Pupils who arrive after the start of registration should report to the school office, and parents/carers should sign the pupil book giving the reason for their lateness.
- Where a child is late on more than one occasion in any 4-week period the Local Authority, (Suffolk County Council) requires the school to write to the parents/carers of the child regarding their child's punctuality. If a pupil is consistently late, a meeting will be arranged to discuss reasons for lateness.

What should I do if my child cannot come to school?

We expect a parent/carer to telephone the school before 9:30 on the first day of absence, and on every day of absence that follows. A message can be left on our Absence Line 01284 828223. If you do not contact us, we will try to telephone you. We also require a written explanation of your child's absence on your child's return to school. A reminder will be sent to you if we have not received your letter. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we may not authorise the absence and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. School staff, the Senior Leadership Team, school governors and the Education Welfare Officer all monitor absence.

Examples of reasons that the school will accept for absence include:

- Illness (unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make all routine appointments before or after school or during the school holidays.)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement or other exceptional family circumstances

Except in the case of illness or emergencies, permission for your child to miss school should be requested well in advance, giving full details of the proposed absence. By giving sufficient advance notice, you will ensure that there is time available for the school to make any necessary further enquiries and for written notification of whether the absence will be authorised/unauthorised to be sent.

In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or other medical evidence or to provide details of medical personnel to enable the school to make direct contact.

Can we take family holidays during term-time?

In line with current legislation, the school Attendance Policy and Local Education Authority procedures, all family holidays should be taken in school closure periods. A 'Leave of Absence' from school may be granted in exceptional circumstances where an application has been made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides, using the relevant form.

The Headteacher will only authorise a leave of absence during term-time if they consider there to be exceptional reasons for taking it. Applications must always be made four weeks in advance and evidence may be requested to support any application. Where an absence has not been authorised by the school in advance and the time off school is taken, the school has a duty to notify the Local Authority's Education Service.

What is a Penalty Notice and when would one be issued?

The law says that parents/carers are committing an offence where their children (of compulsory school age) are absent from school without good reason. A Penalty Notice is a financial penalty issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. The school has a duty to share their attendance data with the Education Attendance Service and to notify them when unauthorised absence has been taken in term time.

Penalty Notices are also issued where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school. Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine where there have been 8 sessions (4 days) of unauthorised absence within a school year. Where the fine is not paid within the prescribed time limit, it will double and further non-payment requires the Local Authority to start legal proceedings against the parents/carers.

I am thinking about taking my child on a trip overseas to visit relatives, what should I do?

The school recognises that such trips help children keep in touch with their extended family although parents would always be encouraged to make such trips during school holiday periods. We appreciate that due to the long distances often involved there may however be some overlap with term time. Should you be considering such an absence you will need to put your request in writing to the Headteacher explaining the reasons and family circumstances for this visit. We may request evidence that this is not just a holiday.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure that your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped for the school day. Show your child that you value his/her learning by asking them about their school day. Attend Parents Evenings and other information sessions at school to enable you to support your child's learning and progress.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems, bullying or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem looking at all appropriate support available. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The Service is based at: West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. IP33 3YU.

What does my child's overall attendance percentage mean?

99% - 100%	We consider attendance to be excellent.
98%	We consider attendance to be very good.
96% - 97%	We consider attendance to be good.
95%	We consider attendance to be satisfactory.
94% and below	Attendance requires improvement. Please see the intervention actions detailed below.

What will happen if my child's attendance level falls?

The school monitors the attendance rate of all children as requested by the Local Authority, Suffolk County Council. Where a child's attendance rate is considered too low the Local Authority, Suffolk County Council requires the school to take intervention action. The following actions will therefore be taken in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

Attendance rate falls below 95% - A letter will be sent home from the school to inform the parent(s)/carer(s) that their child's attendance level requires improvement and the child's attendance will continue to be closely monitored.

Attendance rate falls to 93% - A letter will be sent home from the school to inform the parent(s)/carer(s) that the school are unable to authorise any further absences unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to the school.

Attendance rate falls to 90% – A meeting will be arranged with the parent(s)/carer(s) at the school to discuss attendance and support that the school can offer.

Where attendance does not improve the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted by the school.

Motivation Cooperation Creativity Independence Curiosity Stickability