

St Luke's Primary School



Attendance Notes for Parents

(Updated October 2017)

According to a 2011 Education research paper 'A profile of pupil absence', there is clear evidence that poor pupil attendance leads to poor educational outcomes.

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which students, staff, parents and Education Welfare Service can work in partnership.

At St Luke's we have set a minimum target of 95% attendance to be achieved by all students, even so it is worth noting that children with attendance of 95% will have missed 2 weeks of education. This will have denied them access to a significant part of the curriculum.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and will liaise with home and other agencies about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

A child should come to school every day.

A child should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable." Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised; this is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes:

- arriving at school too late to get a mark
- being absent without a proper explanation
- Truancy

Providing a note is not sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable."

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. It is never better to cover up children's absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together.

If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the school Education Welfare Officer. He or she will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement. However, in extreme cases and if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, court proceedings can be used to prosecute parents.

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Parents may wish to contact the Education Welfare Office themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the school and can be contacted on telephone no. 449449.

Procedures

Illness

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school as soon as possible in person or by telephone. The secretary will telephone parents if a child is absent and no reason has been provided. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other circumstances

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may only be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which are unavoidably in school time, provided a written explanation is received.

Leave during term time

Parents/carers are expected **NOT** to book holidays during term time. Leave of absence is not automatically authorised and will only be granted by the Head Teacher where there are exceptional circumstances. Education Committee guidelines state that parents wishing to take children away on holiday during term time must write to the Head Teacher in the first instance, requesting permission to do so. A form is provided on our school website to support this – paper copies available from the school office. Where such a request is rejected any absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Families that repeatedly take unauthorised absence will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Leave may not be authorised where children have already missed a lot of school in the past or at crucial times of the year. The Head Teacher can authorise up to ten days absence in a child's primary school career. Requests for leave beyond ten days in will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.

Teachers will not provide work for children to complete during term time holidays.

Lateness

Children who are 10 minutes late on a daily basis will miss over 6 and a half days of school in an academic year.

Children must attend on time and parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration (**8.45 am**). Arriving after the start of the session is counted as unauthorised absence. Students need to arrive before 8.50 am after which the register will be closed. Students who arrive after registration will be marked as late. Registers are monitored regularly by the Education Welfare Office who will become involved with families who are persistently late.