



## St Uny CE Academy **Attendance Policy**

Our vision is to be a positive, loving school where children are equipped to live well with Jesus Christ and with others.

Our relationships are underpinned by our chosen Christian values of Respect, friendship and forgiveness.

### **Mission Statement:**

*We believe each child is special, unique and loved by God. We provide a broad, balanced and creative education within a stimulating, inclusive and safe environment, inspired by Christian faith and practice.*

*'Let your light shine before others...'*  
Matthew 5:16

### **Rationale:**

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. It is a part of our Christian ethos to value every child and show them, their parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. Our whole school attendance target is 97%.



### **Types of Absence**

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence.

### **Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Exclusion.
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment.
- Family bereavement.
- Involvement in a public performance.
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc).
- Family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

### **Approved Educational Activity**

Children who are educated off site or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'.

### **Registers**

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. We expect parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55 am. The morning register closes at 9.00 so pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late. Learning starts promptly in our school so pupils who are late miss important lesson time. In considering attendance levels, registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The data from attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- Support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a (half-)termly and yearly basis.
- Identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees.
- Facilitate and encourage early intervention.
- Identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism.
- Identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy.
- Report attendance matters to parents/carers.

### **First Day Response**

As a vigilant and caring school, we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, initially by text and then by a telephone call.

### **Punctuality**

In addressing punctuality at St Uny we:

- Have clear procedures - registers close at 9.00 am and 1.05 pm.
- Publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers.
- Emphasise positive encouragement.
- Praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality.
- Ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons.
- Follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

**It is the responsibility of the Head of School to monitor attendance and punctuality. The Hub Council monitor issues, trends and data relating to attendance.**

### **Leave of Absence**

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation penalty notices could be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met.

**Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:**

- For Y6 pupils in the Spring or Summer term until Key Stage 2 SATs are completed.

**Leave of absence is very unlikely to be authorised:**

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence or an overall percentage of below 96%.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

If a 'Leave Request' form is submitted to the school office, the decision to authorise absence is at the Head of School's discretion based on their assessment of the situation.

- Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Heads will rightly prioritise attendance. Absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

### **Penalty Notices**

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others. Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Currently a penalty notice can be issued if a pupil has 5 consecutive days unauthorised absence within 10 weeks or 10 school days lost to unauthorised absence in 2 consecutive terms. Parents at risk of being issued with a notice will be sent a written warning.

### **Absence for Religious Reasons**

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carers is a member.

### **Recording and Reporting**

Arbor is used to record absence and a file kept of concerns/issues, monitoring and letters to parents and Penalty notices. All data/information relating to absence is secure and confidential and accessible only by appropriate members of staff.

*Review July 2019*