



# THE MINSTER NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

SCHOOL OF INSPIRATION

**DETERMINATION HONOUR BELIEVE**

PREPARING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH INNOVATIVE AND EXCITING LEARNING

## Attendance Policy

Reviewed on: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

To be reviewed on or before: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019



**WE ARE A VOLUNTARY AIDED (VA) SCHOOL WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK**

HEAD TEACHER: MRS STEPHANIE EDMONDS *B Ed HONS*



## A: Impact Assessment summary for policy coversheets

Impact Assessment: Equality, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Sustainability	
<b>Overview:</b> to be completed with a full impact assessment if required.	
<b>Title of Activity/Policy:</b>	New or Revision of Expected Implementation
<b>Author and Date:</b>	Date: Review Date:
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b> Which of the characteristics may be impacted upon? If there is an impact, how has this been considered and mitigated against? What are the risks of proceeding? What are the benefits?	
<b>Safeguarding:</b> Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a student/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered and mitigated against? What are the risks of proceeding? What are the benefits?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> or No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Health and Safety</b> Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered and mitigated against? What are the risks of proceeding? What are the benefits?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> or No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sustainability:</b> Are there expected benefits or impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered and mitigated against?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> or No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Evidence:</b> What evidence do you have for your conclusions? What consultation has taken place? How will you monitor the issues raised?	
<b>Risk:</b> Should this activity/policy result in an entry on the risk register (high/medium) or does it represent a low risk?	High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/>

### Fruits of the Spirit

The Fruits of the Spirit underpin all that we do and we weave these Christian values into the fabric of our school ensuring that they underpin every thought, decision and action made.

This policy has been compiled mindful of these spiritual fruits to make sure they develop and sustain all aspects of school life at The Minster Nursery and Infant School.



## School Attendance & Punctuality Policy

The aim at The Minster Nursery and Infant School is to actively encourage and promote regular and sustained attendance amongst all children.

Regular attendance is important. If children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, they need to attend school regularly. Without this commitment children are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of realising their full potential. Poor attendance can greatly affect future life chances.

Our policy on attendance is written with the aims of the 5 strands of Every Child Matters programme in mind, and incorporating Local Authority policies and guidelines on attendance.

Parents/Carers are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school and are punctual. Maximising attendance is one of the school's major tasks. We take seriously problems which lead to poor attendance. We are committed to working with parents/carers to overcome obstacles that impact upon attendance.

### Expectations

Where children of compulsory age are registered at a school, the law states that they should attend regularly.

#### **We expect that our children will:**

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day

#### **We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for their child will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school



## We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance;
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a child fails to attend, where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences;
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment for children;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of children who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Department of Education's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to our commissioned Education Welfare Officer

## Encouraging Attendance

The Minster Nursery and Infant School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- by rewarding good and improved attendance;
- by celebrating outstanding attendance at the end of academic year assembly
- by monitoring children, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to our commissioned Education Welfare Officer if the irregular attendance continues.

## Responding To Non-Attendance

It is a parent's/carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence.

Where a child is absent, the school register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

An authorised absence is one where the school has either given approval in advance, or an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as a satisfactory justification for the absence.



Satisfactory justification at The Minster Nursery and Infant School is described as:

- Illness
- Medical/Dental Appointments
- Days for religious observance
- Absence due to exceptional circumstances
- Family Bereavement
- Traveller Child in process of travelling

In order to minimise the impact of illness on the general school community, the school strictly follows the guidelines set by the Health Protection Agency regarding exclusion periods relating to infection control. Please contact the school office for further information.

The term 'authorised' refers to authorisation given by the school, not the parent.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been authorised.

The school is not obliged to accept explanations such as looking after other children, shopping, birthday treats, illness of a sibling etc.

The same applies to situations where no explanation for absence is offered.

Any absence which is still unexplained after 2 weeks from the first day of absence will be marked as unauthorised.

At The Minster Nursery and Infant School, the first day of an absence should be covered by a telephone call or email to the school with details of the nature of the illness and, when this can be predicted, the date the child is expected to return. On each subsequent day of absence, a parent must contact the school with a reason for absence.

Where a child has been absent for more than 2 consecutive school days due to illness, medical evidence supporting the reasons given for absence may be asked for. This can come in the form of: Appointment card with child's name and appointment time stated; GP's letter or certificate stating child's name and diagnosis; Prescription made out to the child, dated; Medicine brought in and shown to the Office, with prescription label stating your child's name, dated.



Where possible the school will endeavour to contact parents/carers by telephone or text where a phone message has not been received on the morning of the first day of absence. If the family are not on the telephone, a letter will be sent.

If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss the child's absence. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to our commissioned Education Welfare Officer.

**Persistent non-attendance, where absences cannot be justified in law, may result in the issue of Penalty Notices in accordance with the Local Authority's penalty notice protocol. In addition, the School will support the Education Welfare Service in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.**

### **Leave during Term Time under Exceptional Circumstances**

The taking of leave during school time is not a *right* and can only be taken with the authorisation of the Governing Body. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and the School therefore does not see any reason for parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. All applications must be made on the leave of absence form, which, where possible, must be received at the school not less than 14 days before the intended period of leave.

The Head Teacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, will only authorise leave in exceptional circumstances.

The 2013 Amendments to the Pupil Registration (England) 2006 Regulations state that:

*“Headteachers may not grant any approved leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted”*

Before any request for leave of absence is approved, a Headteacher must be satisfied that there are *“exceptional circumstances”* justifying the request for leave of absence. The Department for Education (DfE) has in their amendments specifically removed references to *family holiday, extended leave* and the statutory threshold of *10 school days*.

If leave is taken without authority, then consideration will be given to issuing a Penalty Notice to each parent/carer. The Penalty Charge is £60 per parent/carer, per child, rising to £120 per parent/carer, per child, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer could be prosecuted.



## Registers

School attendance registers are legal documents. They are required, by law, to be called twice a day, at the start of each session. Our registers are now completed electronically and then transmitted to the school office. They are then printed and kept for fire safety procedures.

Staff must complete the register by inserting a diagonal line across the relevant box for pupils present.

Absent pupils must be recorded as “N”. No other codes should be used by the teacher.

It is the Attendance Officer’s responsibility, in the first instance, to seek an explanation for a child’s absence.

Any letters or verbal explanations for absence given to the teacher are passed to the school office where the appropriate code is logged.

In the Nursery morning session, the register opens at 08.40am and closes at 08.50am. Children arriving after this time, but before 09.20am - the official close of this register - are marked late by the school office as ‘L’ on the register.

In the Nursery afternoon session, the register opens at 12.20pm and closes at 12.30pm. Children arriving after this time, but before 1pm - the official close of this register - are marked late by the school office as ‘L’ on the register.

In Reception, Year One and Year Two, the register opens at 08.50am and closes at 09.00am. Children arriving after this time, but before 09.30am - the official close of this register - are marked late by the school office as ‘L’ on the register.

A note of the time of arrival is made using the electronic register system.

If a child arrives after the official close of the register, they are marked late-absent by placing a ‘U’ on the electronic register. In this way their presence is noted to meet fire-regulations but their lateness is treated as an unauthorised absence for the session.



## **Lateness**

At The Minster Nursery and Infant School we discourage late arrival. A child arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning, but also that of others. Lateness can also lead to anxiety, lowering of self-esteem and lack of educational progress.

In recognition of local circumstances, (bad weather, public transport problems) schools may keep their registers open for a reasonable period (maximum 30 minutes).

Registers are checked weekly. Attention is paid to patterns of lateness emerging.

If a child persistently attends school after the close of the register consideration will be given to (a) the issue of a Penalty Notice in the sum of £60.00 or (b) a referral to our commission Education Welfare Officer.

## **Children left at the end of the day/session**

The morning Nursery session finishes at 11.40am. Children who have not been collected at the end of the session will be brought to the school office.

The afternoon Nursery session finishes at 3.20pm. Children who have not been collected at the end of the session will be brought to the school office.

Nursery parent/carers will be contacted immediately to establish a collection time for the child.

Reception classes finish at 3pm. Children who have not been collected by 3.10pm will be taken to 'The Nest', where their name will be logged onto the late sheet for that day.

Year One classes finish at 3.10pm. Children who have not been collected by 3.20pm will be taken to the 'The Nest', where their name will be logged onto the late sheet for that day.

Year Two classes are dismissed and led to the playground at 3.10pm. Children who have not been collected by 3.20pm will be taken to 'The Nest', where their name will be logged onto the late sheet for that day.



Children who have not been collected by 3.30pm from 'The Nest' will be returned to the school office. A phone call will be made to their home and any other contact numbers.

If we have been unable to contact anyone by 4.30pm the duty social worker at Bernard Wetherill House is called.

The school acknowledges that on very rare occasions parents may be delayed for reasons beyond their control. On these occasions we would normally expect a phone call before school finishes explaining why they will be late and what time the child will be collected and by whom.

The school has a 'late collection' charging policy, which can be found on the schools website at [www.minsterinfants.co.uk](http://www.minsterinfants.co.uk)

### **Changing schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform school as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the child will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Children Missing from Education Department within the Local Authority.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the children at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.



In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

**Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:**

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with our commissioned Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with our commissioned EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate children are identified and referred without delay;
- to work in close collaboration with our commissioned EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- set whole school attendance targets;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with our commissioned EWO.

**Office Staff:**

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually;
- to liaise with the EWO regularly;
- to reinforce good practice at staff meetings;
- to share the Class Teacher's concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the Education Welfare Officer.

**Class Teachers:**

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- to record all reasons for absences in the register;
- to inform the Headteacher of concerns;
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection, this could culminate in non-attendance, and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher.

**School Website & Newsletters**

- Information is available about school Holiday dates
- School Sessions
- Breakfast Club
- Absences



The staff members responsible for attendance matters at The Minster Nursery and Infant School are:

Attendance Officer: Mrs Susan Miller

Headteacher: Mrs Stephanie Edmonds

Our Commissioned Education Welfare Service: TEAM EWS