



St Elizabeth's School and Children's Home

ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2018

Policy Leads: Diane O'Connor and Sam Steinke-Sanderson

Written January 2018
Ratified January 2019
Review May 2019

St. Elizabeth's School

St. Elizabeth's Attendance Policy

"Our school community is together to make the world a better place for all"

St. Elizabeth's School is a residential special school that also offers a number of day placements. Attendance at St. Elizabeth's School is generally very good. We desire that all pupils and students should maintain regular attendance at school in order to promote their well being and development.

The Head of School should be notified and made aware of any absences. It is important to a student's welfare that unexplained absences are explored and if necessary, any concerns referred to appropriate agencies.

Definitions:

Authorised absence

Where a reasonable explanation is offered by parents/ carers for their child's absence it will be regarded as authorised.

Unauthorised absence.

Where no reason is offered or parents/carers knowingly do not keep to the guidelines concerning taking time out from the school day, the absence may be regarded as an unauthorised absence.

Aims:

- To promote and ensure regular attendance
- To ensure the well being of students.
- To ensure good communication between the school and families.
- To ensure that appropriate agencies are aware when a pattern of attendance emerges that causes concern.

Guidance:

1. Planned Absences

Where parents/carers wish to take their child out of school during the school day either to attend an appointment or for another significant reason, they should notify the Head of School in advance in writing (via post, residential staff or E-mail). If the Head of School has any concerns or queries about the absence, then the family will be contacted to discuss the proposed absence.

2. Absence

It is expected that when a day pupil/student is absent, parents/carers, should contact the school office by telephone or e-mail, on the first morning of the absence and preferably before the start of the school day.

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The school office will relay this message to the Class Teacher, Residential Teams and Head of School.

Parents /carers should also try to make contact with the transport company in order to prevent unnecessary journeys.

For residential pupils, parents/carers can make contact through the residential unit, nursing team or school office.

3. Unexplained absence

Where a day / residential student, is not present at registration, and an explanation has not previously been provided, the school office will contact the family home to establish the circumstances for the absence. If there are difficulties contacting the family, the school office will contact other statutory bodies in order to understand the cause.

4. Holidays during term time

As a general principle the taking of holidays during term time is strongly discouraged by the DFE and the school. It is in the student's best interest to attend school and benefit to the maximum opportunity of the educational experiences provided.

However, very occasionally it may be appropriate, in order to attend a special event or experience a happening of a life time, that parents/cares request to take their child out of school during term time.

Request for holidays during the school term will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances because of the negative impact it could have on learning. Any such request must be made in writing to the Head of School.

5. Referral to other agencies

It is our desire to work closely with families to help remedy any genuine difficulties that might exist in maintaining good attendance practices for their children, and we understand many of the reasons why students with special educational needs may miss time at school.

In some situations it may be necessary however to refer the issue to the local authority. This would only occur where either, parents had not engaged with the support offered by the school or where serious welfare issues exist concerning the pupil/student. In these circumstances the Head of School would liaise with the appropriate social service or Child protection agencies.

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