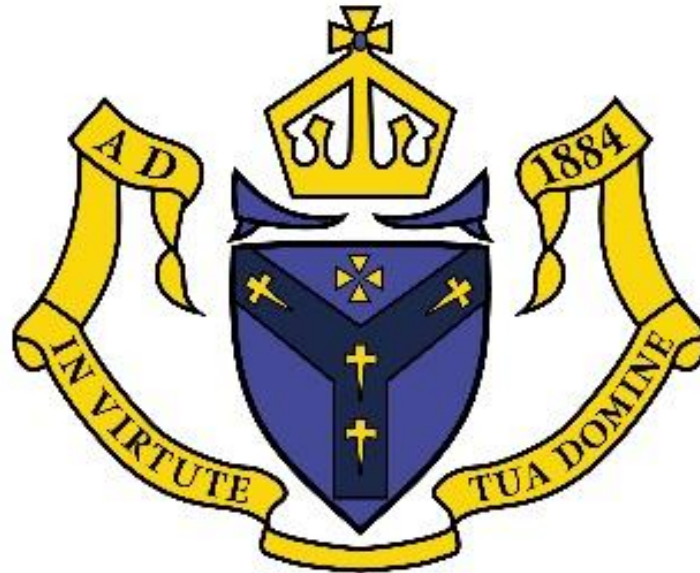




Sissinghurst VA Church of England Primary School

Enjoy, Achieve and Celebrate Together in Faith



The Governors and Staff of Sissinghurst (VA) Church of England Primary School believe the policies and procedures we write help us to continuously improve the school and develop our pupils to become life-long learners and valuable citizens of the future. We are dedicated to providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

Our Christian values of:

Endurance · Koinonia · Friendship · Wisdom

underpin all our policies. We actively reject any form of discrimination.

Policy Title:	Leave of Absence Parental Guidance
Date:	September 2020
Review Date:	September 2022
Reviewed By:	Strategy Governors
Approved By:	Strategy Governors

The Governing Body and the Headteacher do not want to penalise parents for every breach of the rules about attendance, but we do feel that good attendance is essential to ensure that your children receive the best possible education. The Governing Body has therefore issued this guidance, to allow parents to understand the approach that we will follow in various situations when permission to take your child out of school cannot be or has not been authorised.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and, by law, you have to get permission from the Headteacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

The Attendance Policy explains the School's policies and procedures in relation to attendance and how to apply for leave of absence (permission to take your child out of school during term time). It explains the situations in which leave may be and cannot be authorised. You can only obtain leave of absence if:

- you make an application to the Headteacher in advance;
- and there are exceptional circumstances.

The Government regards 90% attendance as the minimum satisfactory level of attendance and this rule is applied when determining whether a fine/penalty notice will be issued for **any** unauthorised absence.

Reasons for Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is **why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason and that are permitted under government guidelines like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Medical and Dental appointments, where possible, should be made for after school or during school holidays. The School understands that this isn't always possible, however, students should attend school prior to or following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence.

Please make sure you do not arrange any appointments or absence during **statutory testing weeks**. (Dates of statutory tests and assessments are in the school newsletter and on the website).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the School and the Educational Welfare Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g., poorly/unwell without a doctor's certificate
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Family holidays

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised. Unauthorised absence also includes any occasions where your child has arrived after the registers have closed i.e., after 9.30am/1.30pm.

Family Holidays

As explained in the Attendance Policy, from September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot therefore be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. However, it is essential that as soon as you know your child will be absent from school you should complete the application form for leave of absence. (Forms are available in the reception area).

Guidance on Penalty Notices

Penalty notice for poor attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- A child is absent for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty notice for persistent lateness

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings
- If the Local Authority takes action to prosecute, parents will be prosecuted for a criminal offence and the ultimate sanction is a fine of up to £2,500, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence.