

ST. ANDREW'S C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

‘Growing and Learning Together with God’

Autumn 2024

Ratified by the Governing Body: October 2024

Review Date: *Annual review*

St. Andrew's CofE Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

School/Academy Vision/Mission Statement

At St. Andrew's CofE Primary School we aim to serve our community, provide and education of the highest quality.

Introduction and Background

St. Andrew's CofE Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

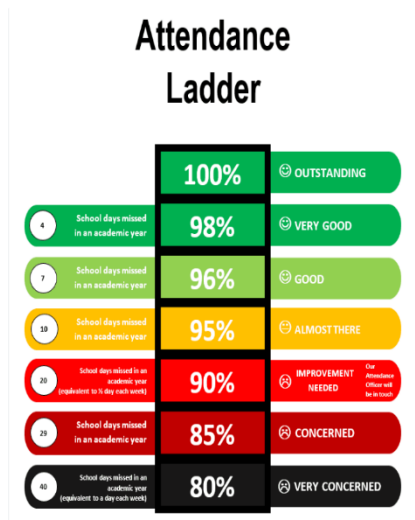
- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

This policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance.



Attendance during one school year	Equivalent days missed	Equivalent sessions missed	Equivalent weeks missed	Equivalent lessons missed
95%	9 days	18 sessions	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	72 sessions	8 weeks	200 lessons

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the Head Teacher not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child’s attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child’s attendance fall below the school’s target for attendance.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and each child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and parents are informed annually about progress to this level and how their child’s attendance compares.

The school’s target is to achieve better than this because good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year absences and punctuality are monitored to show where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Weekly Newsletter and parents are asked for their full support.

Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Head Teacher
Pastoral Lead
Class Teachers

Role of the Governor

Issues regarding attendance are reported to governors during formal and informal visits and at every Governing Body meeting. The Chair of Governors, Reverend Andrew Studdert-Kennedy, can be contacted about matters relating to attendance via chair@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. An email from a known address is acceptable.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason (see below).

Any request for an authorized absence not due to unexpected illness must be submitted at least a week in advance.

Valid reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

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 a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team, which may result in penalties, sanctions, or legal proceedings. This may include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration (9:15am) are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however it is recorded as an absence for the session.
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9am. The school has an absence email address which can be used any time, day or night to report a child's absence. The school office can be contacted from 8:15am or parents can call into school personally and speak to the office staff. The email address is absence@standrewsuxbridge.org.uk
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence if requested to support the absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 90% and there are concerns about this
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Telephone Numbers

There are times when the school needs to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have current contact numbers at all times. Parents should ensure the school is informed of any changes.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss important work and do not spend time with their class teacher missing out on vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and may also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:40am when children can begin to come into school. Registers are taken at 8:45am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time. Children arriving after 8:55am are required

to come in to school via the school office if accompanied by a parent or carer, the parent/carer will explain to the office staff the reason for the lateness, and this will be recorded on our registers. The school may send home 'late notes' in order to keep parents and carers informed. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will regularly monitor patterns of lateness on the gate and speak to relevant parents as necessary.

At 9:15am registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher, Pastoral Lead and /or the Attendance Officer. however, you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models for our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and keep up with any online assignments via our normal learning platforms.

Exceptional Leave

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

There is no form for applying for any exceptional leave, but parents should put any requests in writing, preferably via email to the school office or absence line. Requests should be submitted at least a week in advance.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Head Teacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Head or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing in advance with any supporting documentations. This can be via email using the absence line. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be referred by this school.

At St. Andrew's CofE Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

Rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that if the child is absent without authorization then the parent is guilty of an offence. The authorization comes from the Head Teacher.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Attendance Officer, Pastoral Support Worker, Local Authority Attendance Support Officer, Stronger Families Key Worker or Social Care. We may also use circle time, individual incentive schemes, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance.

The Attendance Team at the Local Authority

The school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss attendance unless the absence relates to leave in term time without permission. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

A referral may be made to the LA under the following circumstances based on the national framework for penalty notices:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. This may span different terms or school years. This will include unauthorised absence for lateness Code U.
- A term time holiday taken without permission would count towards the ten sessions.
- A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. At the third (or subsequent) offence(s) other legal prosecution will be considered.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent or carer for each of their children for example two parents with three children would receive a total of six penalty notices, one parent with two children will receive a total of two penalty notices.

From September 2024 each penalty notice is £80 if paid in the first 21 days, from days 22 to 28 the fine doubles to £160 for each penalty notice.

For the second offence issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 for days 1 – 28, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

The Attendance Support Team has asked us to point out that it is not possible to pay these fines by instalments or lower the cost when they have increased, or to simply fine one parent.

Payment can be made online and instructions on how to pay are included on the penalty notice letter.

If a penalty notice is not paid or the Attendance Support Team assesses that the level of absence warrants court action, the local authority will arrange for a court hearing.

There are a range of sentencing options available to the magistrate including the maximum penalty of a fine of up to £2500 per parent for each offence as well as the possibility of up to three months in prison.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or participationteam@hillingdon.gov.uk

Performance Licences

The applicant for a Performance Licence (usually the production company or theatrical agent) is obliged to seek the view of the school when applying for an absence request. Such a request will only be considered by the school when the child's attendance is at least 90% and the child is making at least expected levels of progress. A request may be declined if either of these thresholds is not met or if the timing of the requested absence could be detrimental to the child's education.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving St. Andrew's CofE Primary School, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all our pupils. In such cases, the Attendance Team should be notified.

Children Missing Education

In Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016), children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing education. Most children and young people are moving schools supported by their parents/carers, schools and local authority admissions services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/carers, what has happened. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding teacher/advisor should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

In the circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head teacher should inform the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. Prior to doing so, the school should have made enquiries to

ascertain whether the child is still residing at the home address and is not attending or whether the child is missing.

Equal Opportunities

That every member of the school community experiences equal chances, irrespective of ethnic origin, race, religion, colour, nationality, political beliefs, disability, age, sex or sexual orientation.

That every member of the school community is valued as an individual and that everyone understands that stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and racism will not be tolerated.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

By sending your child/children to St. Andrew's CofE Primary School, you have given your agreement to abide by this policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes taken from the DfE [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays