

St Ann's Catholic Primary

Attendance Policy



Adopted: September 2024

Review date: September 2025

1. Aim

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning and, for this reason, the school is dedicated to ensuring its Attendance Policy is adhered to as much as possible.

St Ann's School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children attend school regularly. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support. This document is supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Bullying and Behaviour.

2. Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person is of compulsory school age

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

St Ann's School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Governing Body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the Governing Body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and co-ordinating provision and policies for attendance

- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets
- take time at Governors' meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance co-ordination and set targets for the future.

b) School Leadership Team

As part of a whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in its approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- co-ordinate with the Governing Body to monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and Government guidance and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and Government guidance on attendance is complied with and that it is up to date with any legislative changes and implementation
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the Governing Body each term and the lead Governor for Attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- engage with the LA regarding St Ann's attendance and share information on individual pupil's attendance when needed.
- explore with families any further support needs that may require referrals made to external agencies.
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

c) Teachers and Support Staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents.

- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and Government guidance and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.
- Ensure that the school's attendance expectations (see Appendix 1) are shared with the pupils.

d) Parents and Carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section 4) and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance, giving an explanation either via email, telephone or speaking to a member of the office staff.
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc, so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher (see section 4.5)
- sign a Home-School Agreement (HSA)
- Ensure that the school's attendance expectations (see Appendix 1) are shared with their children.
- Upon late arrival go straight to the school office where the pupil will make their way to class and parents will be expected to provide a reason for their lateness

e) Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance expectations (see Appendix 1) and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see section 4.g). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their teachers. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- sign a Home–School Agreement.

4. Categories of Absence and Procedure for Reporting Absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences, they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child.

a) Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as evidence of a medical appointment, the child's prescription or medicine packaging (as long as it has a clear label stating the date prescribed and who for on the bottle or box). If these are not provided on request, it will result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

b) Medical or Dental Appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

c) Authorised Absences

There may be some exceptional instances where the school may authorise absence, such as for a family bereavement.

d) Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The Head teacher or class teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

e) Family Holidays and Extended Leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be

made in writing to the Headteacher, four weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The Headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time. If permission is not granted but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the school or prosecution by the Local Authority. (See appendix 2)

f) Religious Observance

St Ann's acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Leave may be granted for any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents'/carers' religious body.

Parents/carers are requested wherever possible to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than a maximum of three days in total in any academic year.'

g) Late Arrival

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

In the morning, the classroom doors will open at 8:30am and close at 8:40am. After 8:40am, children should be brought into school through the main entrance. Registration begins at 8.50am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as '*late before registration closes*' (L). The morning registration period ends at 9:00am. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as Late after registration closes (U). If a pupil arrives after the registration period has closed (9:00am) the parents, carers or guardian, should go straight to the school office where the pupil will make their way to class and parents will be expected to provide a reason for their lateness. (Please see Appendix 1)

You and your Child

Excellent	Your child's attendance is above 98% As well as being an excellent attender, your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and later have real opportunity in further education or
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	the world of work
Good	Your child's attendance is 96-97% Your child is likely to achieve their targets that will give them the skills they need for the next phase of their education.
Expected	Your child's attendance is 96% and has reached the school's target
Needs to Improve	Your child's attendance is 90-95% This is below the national Government threshold of 96%
Concern	Your child's attendance is below 90% You may receive a fixed penalty fine as your child is now classed as a persistent absentee. You will start receiving warning letters and attendance will be monitored. School letters need to start going out prior to this. <i>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons and learning.</i>

5. School Action: Following up Absences

Class registers are assessed by the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents/carers will be contacted to give a reason for their child's absence (See section 4a in relation to illness absences) The reason for absence will be recorded within the child's attendance record.

This is for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days and where the absence was unauthorised and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, the LA may advise the school to remove the child from the school roll. The school will notify the Local Authority when such action is taken.

Signed by:

_____ **Chair of Governors Date:**

S. Eady

Headteacher

Date: 08.09.2024

Appendix 1

8:30am	Classroom doors open
8:40am	Classroom doors close and morning registration begins. Children need to enter school via the main entrance after this time.
8:40am – 8:50am	Children arriving during this time will be marked as 'L' (Late before registration closes)
8:50am	Morning registration closes. Children arriving after this time will be marked as 'U' (Late after registration closes)

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Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child
Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.
For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 consecutive days of term time leave
Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period
Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.