



# St Andrew's Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

2022



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Approved by	Local Governing Body	Date Approved	22/06/2022
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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The local governing body

The local governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The attendance team**

The school attendance team:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the school leader responsible (DH and HT)
- Works with NE Surrey Inclusion Service to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.4 Class teachers and form tutors**

Class teachers and year group leads are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.5 School office staff / attendance team**

These staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity such as:
  1. Field trips and educational visits
  2. Sporting activities
  3. Link courses or approved education off site activities
  4. Most types of dual registration
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment which can only be completed by the attendance team. Teacher may add extra notes only.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for the duration of a pupil's time at St Andrew's, plus the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 am and the register for the second session is completed by the office.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school afterwards if possible. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Please note that, if a pupil arrives at school after 8.50 am a late mark will be recorded. If a child arrives after 9.20am they must report to the office, and it will be recorded as 'late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. Any pupil arriving after 8.50 must be accompanied to the office by a parent or carer.

## 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling home by phone during the day.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

St Andrew's: Parents will be informed as part of the school's end of year report.

Parents are informed when a child's attendance becomes a concern or dips below 90% without good cause.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a reason for missing school that is a significant learning opportunity the timing of which falls outside the reasonable control of the parents/carers.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an *Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form* must, wherever possible, be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. This form can be obtained from the attendance office or school website.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Learning opportunities through participation or competition that will enhance a child's education
- Funeral or compassionate leave

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where a student's attendance has fallen below 90%, they are considered to be 'persistently absent'. The school will always communicate attendance and punctuality concerns at the earliest opportunity, inviting parents/carers into school to discuss ways in which the school can support the pupil.

However, if the pupil's attendance has fallen below 87%, the Inclusion Officer will be informed, and a meeting may be arranged between the IO, parents/carer and pupil. They may also visit the family home.

### **5.3 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

ELT encourages regular attendance in the following ways,

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see Punctuality and Lateness).
- by publishing attendance statistics
- by celebrating good attendance via the school website, newsletters, emails, House Competitions, assemblies and certificates. We continue to investigate further methods to celebrate attendance in line with our rewards policy.
- The lead on Attendance will monitor pupils' attendance with the attendance team within school, Governors, Deputy Head and Surrey Inclusion Service
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness,
- inviting parents/carers into school to discuss possible issues and how to support the pupils / family in raising attendance
- by if necessary arranging meetings with parents/carers
- by referring the families to the attached school Inclusion Officer if the irregular attendance continues

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

If the pupil has 10 unauthorised school sessions absent in a 6-week period – which includes arriving late after close of register, the parents/carers may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice (see sections 5.3).

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an Inclusion Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the local governing body.

Our school collects and stores attendance data, and it may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum updated by the attendance team annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full local governing body.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend



<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day