Attendance policy

St Paul's CE Primary School

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Date:** July 2024
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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

We adopt a whole school culture to improving attendance where every member of the school and trust have high expectations for all our pupils and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for identifying and addressing barriers to attendance.

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding 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
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices/prosecution, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Wright Headteacher with overall responsibility for improving and championing attendance and can be contacted via 0161 338 2060 /admin@cdatstpaulsprimary.co.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- The point of contact for staff pupils and parents to discuss attendance matter
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensuring that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance processes.
- Recording and monitoring attendance twice daily (a.m. and p.m.) using the correct codes.
- Contributing to strategy meetings and interventions.
- Working with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.
- Engaging with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend school.

The attendance officer is Miss Seddon and can be contacted via 0161 338 2060 / admin@cdatstpaulsprimary.co.uk

3.5 The class teacher

Class teacher are responsible for recording attendance accurately on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Registers are taken twice a day morning and afternoon session.

- Promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Ensuring that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy.
- Point of initial contact for parents and pupils.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensuring that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance processes.

3.7 Parents & Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment.
- Call / email the school to report their child's absence before 9.30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return admin@cdatstpaulsprimary.co.uk 0161 338 2060
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day (4.3)
- 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 at home.
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, ready for learning.

- Speak to their teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.

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
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 am on each school day. The end of the school day is 3.15pm.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 8.50 am. After 8.50 pupils will need to be signed in at the school office, and will be recorded as Late (L Code). After 9.10am pupils will be recorded as U code (unauthorised absence). The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45 pm reception / Year 1 & 2 13:00 Year 3 & 4 13.15 Year 5/6 13.30

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am by contacting the school office by telephone or email. (see also section 7).

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admin@cdatstpaulsprimary.co.uk

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

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.

Any absences just before or straight after any school holiday will be seen as an extension of the holidays unless medical evidence is provided to authorise these days**.**

4.3 Planned absence

Attending emergency medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school and medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card is provided. 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, attending school either side of appointments.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils who arrive late should go straight to the school office and be signed in by an adult and provide a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for lateness, if after morning registration has closed, will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, and the session will be marked as unauthorised.
- Pupils who are identified as persistently late will be receive formal letters.
- 5 Lates Letter 1
- 10 Lates Letter 2
- 15 Lates Letter 3 – parents will be invited into school to discuss ways in which we can work with families to offer support and advice.
- If all strategies to bring about an improvement has failed a referral subject to criteria being met may be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer requesting formal legal action, ultimately this may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice fine or prosecution in Magistrates Court.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer email and school spider messages will be sent on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.
- Where school staff have been unsuccessful at locating a family and after a period of no less than 10 school days, a Child Missing Education (CME) referral form will be submitted.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels within the child's end of year report. We may inform parents more regularly if there are concerns over increasing patterns of absence.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Request for absence due to holidays are rarely approved.

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.

5.2 Family Holidays and Extended absences

- Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of 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 head teacher in advance of the leave being taken.
- It is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

- 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 or prosecution by the local authority. If criteria is met, a Penalty Notice will be issued on the first instance and subsequent absences the Local Authority may consider prosecution. See 5.3

5.3 Legal Sanctions

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

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

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Attendance Newsletters sent to parents at the start of the year
- Communication with parents celebrating good attendance
- EYFS Induction talk
- Analysing attendance data
- Establish a positive yet firm whole-school approach to attendance
- Monitor pupils from the persistently and severely absent groups and those who are emerging PA
- Tailored strategies to meet the needs of persistent and severe absentees
- Weekly attendance certificates in celebration assembly
- Half-termly attendance prize box is given to the class with the highest attendance for that period.
- End of year rewards for 99% and above
- Staff to talk about attendance to pupils and emphasise the importance of good attendance and provide praise to students who meet individual and school targets.
- Bespoke reward system for individual children who require more support

7. Attendance monitoring

Gathering attendance data from our management information system (MIS), create separate reports for different cohorts of pupils and identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. Reports are gathered weekly for each cohort and the breakdown helps to build a bigger picture. Once a cohort has been identified, patterns of absence can be clearly identified and potential interventions can be put in place to remove barriers to nonattendance.

Different groups may include:

- Pupil Premium
- FSM
- Persistently absent
- Break down of individual attendance codes
- SEN

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern weekly

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Use staged letters to inform parent of attendance and the impact
- Implement Early intervention Strategies
- Letter 1 at 95%
- Letter 2 93%
- Letter 3 90%
- If all strategies to bring about an improvement has failed a referral subject to criteria being met may be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer requesting formal legal action, ultimately this may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice fine or prosecution in Magistrates Court.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school, creating Attendance Improvement plans where necessary. Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance The attendance officer holds regular meeting with (EWO) Educational Welfare Officer.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Attendance Officer and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy