



ST. ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL & CHRIST CHURCH PRIMARY SW9 ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE AND GOOD PUNCTUALITY

Regular attendance and good punctuality of pupils is critical if children are to have the very best learning experience. If a child's attendance is good and they always arrive on time for lessons they will show greater understanding, they will be positive, confident and ultimately will achieve better results. Setting good attendance and punctuality patterns from the start will help children as they become more responsible in later life.

Children who do not attend school regularly and those who are often late may not be able to keep up with their work and they may fall behind. This may lead to anxiety and lack of confidence. It is fact that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Year 6 (KS2) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

At St. Andrew's and Christ Church SW9 we want to do the very best for our children and we will always work with parents to offer support and advice where it is needed.

2. THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND RIGHT TO A FULL-TIME EDUCATION

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

3. AIMS

We are committed to ensuring that attendance and punctuality is a high priority for all staff, parents, pupils and partners of the school community. We will meet our obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance and punctuality, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- 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
- Maintaining clear lines of communication between home and school
- Making all expectations relating to attendance and punctuality clear to all parties affected by them

The individual and overall school attendance target is at least 96%.

4. 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](#)

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance and punctuality data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding senior leaders to account for the implementation of this policy

5.2 The Executive Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of the attendance and punctuality policy and procedures
- Ensuring the collection of accurate statistical data and reporting to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3 The Designated Senior Leader for attendance 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
- 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

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance across the SW9 Partnership is Ms Sue Robbins

5.4 The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to senior leaders
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The Attendance Officer at St. Andrew's is Ms Paulette Pauliszky and at Christ Church is Ms Gineice Phipps.

5.5 Responsibility of the School Office Administrative Staff

- To set up of registers at the beginning of the school year
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to a senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of a pupil's absence if no contact has been made

5.6 Responsibility of Parents/Carers

- It is every parent or carer's duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly
- To ensure their child arrives on time for school every day at 8.55am and is collected promptly at 3.30pm every day
- To contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am and each subsequent day if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason
- Provide evidence for their child's absence from school for authorisation purposes, if required.
- To support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full attendance at school
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

5.7 Responsibility of Pupils

- To attend school regularly
- To arrive on time

5.8 Responsibility of the Local Authority

- Advise and support the actions of the designated senior leader for attendance at the school
- To initiate court action against referred parents/carers of pupils that are not meeting the school targets

6. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

6.1 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

The register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- 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
- See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
 - The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made
 - Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55 am on each school day
 - The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am
 - The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm or 1.30pm and will be kept open for 10 minutes

6.2 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 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.
- 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.

6.3 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 and provides evidence by way of an appointment card, letter, text or email. Please provide this information to office staff.
- However, 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.
- 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.

6.4 Following up unexplained absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Where any pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- 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 – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

- 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
- If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers or other emergency contacts we will begin to make other reasonable lines of enquiries. We will try to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and carry out home visits.
- If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Lambeth Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquires to known friends and wider family.
- **Ten days' absence:** We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns will be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6.5 Reporting to parents/carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at termly parent/teacher meetings.
- If the school are concerned about a child's attendance or punctuality parents/carers will be invited in to school for a meeting. We will offer as much support as we can to families and pupils to help improve attendance, this may be – an invitation to join the breakfast club, regular phone calls or check ins, early help or social care support.

7. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

7.1 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

7.2 Late system

- Pupils who arrive after 9am should report to the office straight away where a record of their arrival time will be kept.
- Office staff will then enter a late mark into the register accompanied by the time and reason for lateness.
- The register closes at 9.30am. If a child arrives after 9.30 a notice of absence is recorded as unauthorised (U) unless the child is attending a medical appointment. Proof of appointments must be given to the office staff before the child attends their appointment. A persistent U code (6 in a term) will result in a referral to the Local Authority.
- Where persistent lateness exists the parent/carer will then be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If punctuality remains poor a referral will be made to the Local Authority/Social Care.

7.3 Legal sanctions

- The 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.

8. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

8.1 Approval for term-time absence

- The Executive Headteacher or Head of School 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.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a family emergency.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- We have a very strict policy about term time holidays. Our policy is to refuse all applications for holidays during term time. As a school, we are no longer prepared to accept that our children will miss out on their education due to absence during term time. Children are at school for 190 days in the year. That leaves 175 days for holidays and other trips.
- Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
 - 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 parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
 - Traveller pupils 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.

8.2 Applying for Exceptional Leave of absence during term time

Parents/carers can complete the form or ask one of the office staff for a copy. This must be done at least 3 weeks in advance of the date of the proposed leave. They should receive a response within 5 working days. Term time holidays will NOT BE AUTHORISED unless there are exceptional circumstances which might justify it. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

8.3 What are exceptional circumstances?

It is the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term time leave will be considered on an individual basis.

Exceptional leave is NOT:

- Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Parent/carer work commitments
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term, half term.

Exceptional leave MAY be:

- Grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and they must travel in an emergency
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, eg family wedding/funeral.
- An event that requires a child performance licence

What if we decide to go anyway?

- If the Executive Headteacher or head of school has not authorised the leave, and the child is absent from school then they will receive a minimum fine of £60 per child. If the child remains out of school for more than 10 days then they risk losing their child's place.
- If the time out of school makes the child's attendance drop below 90%, then they are known as 'persistently absent'. This means facing possible court action and prosecution.

Taking children out of school during term time disrupts children's learning and risks financial penalties.

8.4 If we authorise an Exceptional Leave of Absence

- If we do authorise a leave of absence under exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must understand the educational impact upon the child. We will also explain what work the child will miss at school, and agree how this may be addressed, either during the holiday or upon return. Taking work on special leave is no substitute for classroom teaching.
- If we do authorise leave the family will receive a copy of the signed form which confirms the dates when the child will be absent and the agreed date for return. It can only be signed by the Executive Headteacher or the Head of School. A copy will be kept in the file in the office for our records.
- If a pupil is absent for longer than the agreed period a referral will be made to the Local Authority and Off Rolling may occur.

8.5 Process for removing a child's details from the school roll

We have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of all pupils and, as part of this, will investigate any unexplained absences from school as well as in circumstances where the school is unsatisfied with the reason provided for absence.

- School will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 5 school days or more without permission. School will also notify the authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in certain circumstances.
- No child shall be taken off roll until the school is satisfied that they are safe and accounted for. This will mean that we have confirmation of them starting a new school/educational establishment.
- Where it is not possible to verify where a child is, the local authority will be informed and a child will only be taken off roll once they give authorisation.
- Where a parent has elected to home-school their child, the local authority home schooling department are informed and a child will only be taken off roll once they give authorisation.
- Should the school have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is they will inform the local authority and may ask the police to carry out a welfare check on the child/ren.

9. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

- We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve issues before they become entrenched.
- We monitor attendance on a regular basis and will contact parents where attendance is below 96% to offer support.
- Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- End of term and end of year attendance and punctuality rewards are given to individuals in an Attendance Assembly.
- Children who attend school on time every day for a whole term receive a 100% badge and certificate.
- The class that achieves the highest attendance percentage gets to display the school attendance trophy for the following term.
- Teachers regularly promote excellent attendance with their classes. Teachers celebrate outstanding attendance with their classes and encourage the class to work together as a team to achieve the attendance rewards.
- Children who attend school on time every day for a whole year receive a trophy and a certificate. Parents are also invited to these assemblies and photos are shared on the school newsletter.
- The school newsletters are used to highlight the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- It includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance policy and target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives that the school is using to promote attendance and punctuality.
- The school website include information about school timings, attendance information and details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality.

10. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

10.1 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
- 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 governing board.

10.2 Analysing and using data to improve 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
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

10.3 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
- 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance