



Attendance Policy

Committee Name:	Whole Governing Body
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Person responsible:	Head Teacher

‘Together we live and grow in the love of Jesus Christ.’

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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 and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to 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 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 [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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body (Standards and Achievement Committee) 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
- 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, 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
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher (Libby Granite) and can be contacted via head@stsavioursprimary.co.uk or 0207 084 6772.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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

The attendance officer is Kasanah Shalders-Gayle and can be contacted via kshalders-gayle@westminster.gov.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS promptly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

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

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
- 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 8:55a.m on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55a.m and will be kept open until 9:15a.m. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15p.m and will be kept open until 1:40p.m.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:00a.m or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). This should be done by telephoning the School Office. A message can be left on the answerphone if needs be.

Parents/carers need to phone the school on each day of their child's absence, unless a time period has been discussed on the first day. See [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) for advice about when to keep your child off school.

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

Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

A letter from a parent/carer is needed when:

- a child has any condition requiring hospital or surgical care
- the child returns to school with a cast or stitches
- the child needs restricted PE lessons or playtime activities for more than 3 consecutive days

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. A 'Medical Appointment form' should be completed and returned to the School Office. This is available on the school website or from the School Office.

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. 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

Punctuality is monitored weekly, and ongoing punctuality issues will be discussed with the parents/carers, and escalated to the Local Authority if necessary.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect 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. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the pupil's home or contact the police
- 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

4.6 Reporting to parents

Pupils' attendance is reported to parents in their Annual School report.

Parents of pupils whose attendance is 90% or below will be notified each half term by letter.

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, 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.

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. This is one day each term, with a maximum of 3 days in an academic year
- 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

An 'Absence request form' must be completed and returned to the School Office. These are available on the school website.

If a leave of absence is granted, parents must ensure that their child returns to school after the agreed period. If, for whatever reason, there is the possibility of a delay in returning, it is the parents' responsibility to contact the school to explain the reason for this.

If a pupil does not return to school on the date agreed, the school will take steps to contact the parent/family to enquire of the child's whereabouts. The school will also liaise with the Attendance Officer regarding removal of the child from the school register.

This school, the local authority and the government actively discourage holidays in term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. **It is very rare for a term time absence to be authorised.** Cheaper travel cost will never be an acceptable reason for an authorised holiday during term time.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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

- All staff have high expectations for attendance which are shared with the children
- Share with pupils and parents the benefits of good punctuality and attendance
- Sharing the link between attendance and attainment
- Highlighting attendance in the newsletter and assemblies
- Work with families to understand barriers to attendance and how these can be overcome
- Attendance Cup awarded weekly to the class with the highest attendance

7. Attendance monitoring

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

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Attendance is monitored weekly by the Headteacher.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Westminster Attendance team.

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 governing body.

We collect attendance data via SIMS, and use it 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

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
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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

Parents will be notified each term if their child's attendance is below 90%.

If a pupil's absence is a cause for concern (in danger of becoming below 90%), a meeting will be arranged with the parents.

No absences will be authorised for pupils whose attendance is below 90%.

Advice will be sought from the Westminster Attendance team, and the appropriate actions will be taken.

Pupils' whose absence is below 90% may also be referred to the Early Help Team.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full 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
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day