



Attendance Policy

Responsible for the policy:	Miss E Johnson (Deputy Head teacher)	
Approved by:	M.Massey (Chair of Governors)	Date: September 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 also 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

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
- 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
- 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 is Emma Johnson (Deputy Head teacher).

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Engaging and supporting parents to secure their child's regular school attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data allowing school 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 the School Education Consultant to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/ Senior Vice Principal (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices and/or other appropriate legal action deemed appropriate

The attendance officer is Helen Taylor and can be contacted via helen.taylor@sws.cheshire.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via SIMS.

Form tutors are responsible for overseeing the attendance of each student in their form group. They are responsible for challenging poor attendance and having informal discussions with students to support them in improving their attendance.

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
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer/ relevant pastoral manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time (8.30am)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am 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 every day on time (8.30am)
- Attend every timetabled session 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
- Absent
- 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 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.00pm and will be kept open until 12.30pm.

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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school reception staff (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 with 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.

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

A pupil who arrives after 8.30am but before 8.40am will:

- Complete the morning line up routine within the 'Late Gate' entry of the school
- Receive a 30-minute detention with the relevant Raising Standards Lead if they use the 'Late Gate' two or more times in one week.

A pupil who arrives after 8.40am will:

- Sign in at reception and will wait to be collected by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and then escorted to lesson.
- Receive a 30-minute detention after school that day

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 on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Vulnerable students will be prioritised when making calls home. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take measures to establish contact such as carrying out a home visit or calling 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 the school attendance consultant.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Regular communication between school and parents/carers around attendance concerns is a priority. The school notifies parents/carers of concerns through letters. (see Appendix 2). Absence alerts trigger a text home on each day of absence. A follow up call from the Attendance Officer will be made when no contact with parents can be achieved and a home visit may be conducted. Parents receive a termly report highlighting their child's attendance. Attendance is discussed with parent/carers at Early Help Meetings, CIN and CP meetings and also as appropriate at meetings with other external professionals.

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, considering 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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school reception. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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
- 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

School will respond in writing to any request made. Parents/carers do need to be aware however with the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force on 19 August 2024.

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period: Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.

However, the Local Authority retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

5.2 Absence Due to Illness

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office by telephone or through the school app Edulink. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than 4 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.

5.3 Irregular Attendance

Parents/carers should be aware with the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force on 19 August 2024.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period - A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.

However, the Local Authority retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

5.2 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.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice or instigate a prosecution 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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Positive attendance is rewarded in various ways:

- Weekly celebration assemblies are held in each year group to acknowledge the excellent attendance of individual students and form groups in year each group.
- 'Attendance Streaks' (consecutive days attendance) are celebrated, and students receive prizes for building up their streak value across the school year
- Half termly reward trips/ events are used to celebrate very good attendance and behaviour in line with our school core values.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored daily by the attendance team.

Form tutors are responsible for overseeing the attendance of each student in their form group. Leaders of the provisions are responsible for overseeing the attendance of each student in their provision, reporting to Raising Standards Leads. Form tutors and leaders of provisions are responsible for challenging poor attendance and having informal discussions with students to support them in improving their attendance. They will specifically oversee the students who fall into the bracket of excellent attendance (96% and above). This will be done using informal and discreet conversations during form time.

Pastoral Managers are responsible for overseeing the attendance of students in their year group with 93-95% attendance. They are responsible for challenging poor attendance and having informal discussions with students and parents/ carers to support them in improving their attendance.

Raising Standards Leads are responsible for overseeing the attendance of students in their year group with 91-94% attendance. They are responsible for challenging poor attendance and having informal discussions with students and parents/ carers to support them in improving their attendance.

The Attendance Team, including the School Attendance Consultant (supported by the attendance team), are responsible for overseeing the attendance of students with 90% and below attendance. They are responsible for challenging poor attendance and having discussions with students and parents/ carers to support them in improving their attendance.

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

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.

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 form tutors, pastoral managers, raising standards leads 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every academic year by the Senior Vice Principal. 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
- Rewards and Behaviour policy
- Exclusions policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

OFFICIAL

/ Present AM

\ Present PM

B Attending other approved educational activity (not sporting or work experience). See * and **. See note * re remote education**

C1 Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.

C2 Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.

C Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

D Dual registered at another school and attending the other school for that session. (Not classed as a possible attendance)

E Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

G Holiday not granted by school.

I Illness (not medical or dental appointments).

J1 Absence to attend an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

K Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority but not at a school they are registered at. See **

L Late (before reg closed)

M Medical or dental appointments

N Reason for absence not yet established. See ****

O Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

P Approved sporting activity. See *

Q Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause – Local Authority has not met duty under regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements.

R Religious observance

S Study leave for a public exam

T Parent travelling for occupational purposes. NB definition of pupil's this applies to.

U Arrived in school after registration closes.

V Educational visit – attending an educational trip or visit arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.

W Work experience. See *

Y1 Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available.

Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.

Y3 Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use.

Y4 Whole school site unexpectedly closed

Y5 Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention.

Y6 Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to

incidence or transmission of infection or disease.

Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. See **

X Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Z Prospective pupil not on admission register

Planned whole school closure

Attendance and absence

codes (from 19th August 2024)

OFFICIAL

*** Not taking place at school, not arranged by the LA, educational in nature, school has approved attendance, school satisfied the activity is supervised by appropriate person.**

**** School must record the nature of the activity e.g. Taster day at another school (code B)**

Medical

Needs tuition (Code K) or the nature of the unavoidable cause (code Y7).

***** Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as**

absent using the most appropriate code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.

****** Every effort should be made to establish the reason for absence. Another code must be entered after 5 days. If no reason can be established, then Code O should be entered.**

Appendix 2: Letters

LETTER 1

Dear.....

Student's Name:Form:.....

Your child's current attendance at Sir William Stanier School is only %.

The Registration Certificate is enclosed which highlights the current percentage attendance and absences to date. I am concerned that unless this attendance begins to improve, it will have a detrimental effect upon your child's academic progress.

Regular attendance at school is vital if our students are to make good progress and benefit fully from all the opportunities that school can offer. There is a clear link between attendance and academic progress, so as a school we expect all students to aim for an attendance of at least 96%.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and expect to see a positive improvement in this over the next few weeks.

If there are any specific problems or concerns you have, which you feel may be impacting upon your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school on 01270 660880.

Yours sincerely

Miss E Johnson

Deputy Head Teacher

LETTER 2

Dear

Student's Name: Form:

Your child's attendance during this academic year continues to be a cause for concern. We have enclosed their Registration Certificate which shows the current percentage attendance and absences to date.

I would like to invite you to a meeting at Sir William Stanier School on..... at to discuss .. attendance, as I am concerned that their attendance does not appear to be making any positive improvements.

This meeting will be useful to discuss how we can work together to improve the attendance of your child in order that we do not have to consider any future potential legal action.

You should be aware that 10+ sessions of unauthorised absences in a rolling 10-week period *may* result in you receiving a Penalty Notice. This is a penalty of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution.

Please make every effort to attend this meeting so we can help to support you in securing 's regular school attendance.

Yours sincerely

**Miss E Johnson
Deputy Head teacher**

FORMAL WARNING LETTER

Dear

Re: DOB:

A registered student at:

FORMAL WARNING LETTER

I am concerned that..... 's attendance at Sir William Stanier School continues to be unsatisfactory. Since he/she has been absent from school on.....occasions out of a possible

As there does not appear to be a legitimate explanation for.....'s unsatisfactory school attendance, I must remind you of your legal responsibility that under the terms of Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which 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”

Sections 444 (1) and (1A) Of the Education Act 1996 state that:

“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence 444 (1)

If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence” 444(1A)

These are criminal offences which upon conviction carry a criminal record.

There are specific defences to this offence which are summarised on the enclosed Information Sheet.

I must advise you that unless..... resumes regular school attendance or you support a legitimate reason for the absences within the next 10 days the Local Authority will consider taking legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

Should you require any support or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school on 01270 660880.

Yours sincerely

Miss E Johnson
Deputy Head Teacher