



## **ST. ANDREW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Our Vision**

At St Andrew's CE Primary School, we aim to bring children to a place where they can realise their full potential. Our Christian values are the foundation of all we do and each one is a facet of the central value, love, which 'always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.' (1 Corinthians 13:7)

#### **Introduction**

At St. Andrew's CE Primary School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences, underpinned by our core Christian values, help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

#### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

#### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance;
- Reward good or improving attendance through praise.
  
- Set meetings with carers / parents if attendance does not improve.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

A good resource has been realised by Solihull County Council around Emotional School Based avoidance which can be seen here. [Emotionally Based School Non-attendance - Young persons leaflet \(solihull.gov.uk\)](http://solihull.gov.uk)

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or 50% for a 'severe absentee' of schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA or SA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA and SA pupils and their parents are subject to a Parent contract which may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA and SA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA or SA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### First Day Absence

Parents/Carers are required to report their child's absence by telephone **before 9.00 am**. (A message may be left on the school's answerphone). Please do not email the school as emails are often not checked until later in the day. This information will be passed onto the relevant class teacher and it will be entered into the attendance register.

Should a child be absent from the class at the time of registration with no explanation received, the class teacher or teaching assistant will inform the office before the end of the registration period. The School Administrator will telephone the Parent/Carer for an explanation.

If the parent/carer is still unavailable, the School Administrator will telephone named contacts from the child's data file.

## Second Day Absence

If your child is still unable to attend school, please telephone the school again before 9am.

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation an email will be sent to the Parent/Carers asking them to contact the school immediately.

## Continuing Absence

If your child continues to be unable to attend school, please telephone the school every morning until their return, unless you have agreed otherwise with the school.

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation, an email will be sent to the parent/carers asking them to contact the school immediately.

## **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## **The County Attendance Team:**

There have been recent updates to penalty notices. As of August 19<sup>th</sup> 2024, the following changes will take place:

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. From autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action

**PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING**

**1 FIRST OFFENCE**  
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days  
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

**2 SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)**  
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

**3 THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)**  
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

**10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD**  
Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after **19th August 2024**.

Please follow the link for the Publication that will start from 19th August 2024.  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Please note that St Andrews Church of England Primary School does not benefit from penalty notice fines.

“The penalty notice system is not a money-making scheme and local authorities should not have income targets. Any revenues collected through the system must be ring fenced for attendance.” (Payment of Penalties, Working together to improve school attendance DfE.)

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Research has shown that there is a strong link between attendance and a child's achievement:

<b>Minutes late per day</b>	<b>Equivalent of missing</b>
5 Minutes	3.4 school days a year
10 Minutes	6.9 school days a year
15 Minutes	10.3 school days a year
20 Minutes	13.8 school days a year
30 Minutes	20.7 school days a year

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts when our classroom doors open at 8.45am. We expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.20 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Registers:

AM open: 9.00

AM close: 9.20

PM open: 1.00

PM close: 1.20

### **Exceptional Leave:**

Schools can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at the Head Teachers discretion. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Each request will be considered individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

### Holidays

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

### Medical absence due to illness

School work can be sent home if children are off for a sustained amount of time due to a medical condition or illness. Please speak to the attendance lead at school or your child's class teacher and they will be happy to facilitate this. For extended periods of absence a medical note may be required.

### **Process of attendance intervention:**

1. Attendance will be monitored by the attendance lead and if in any given month a child's attendance falls below 90% within the year a letter will be sent home to make parents/ carers aware.
2. If attendance does not improve a second letter will be sent out and a phone call made to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to resolve them.
3. Support is facilitated to help overcome barriers such as setting up Early help, A TAF (team around the family) or attendance meetings.

4. Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, depending on the circumstances, formalised support such as an attendance contract or an education supervision order may be implemented.
5. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforced attendance through statutory intervention such as a penalty notice or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education.

**The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any extended unauthorised absence.**

**Your local council can give each parent a fine of £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**

**Vulnerable children:**

Vulnerable children are expected to attend school as other children are.

Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of attendance are those across all year groups who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from good attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

Unless stated otherwise due to a reduced timetable (RITT), being educated off-site or another exceptional circumstance the same process, as stated above, applies to your child.

**School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home - School bulletin and we ask for your full support.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

- Ms Softley- County Attendance Officer
- Mrs Collier- School Attendance Lead
- Mrs Mann – School Administrator
- Mrs Mashru - Headteacher
- Mrs Gerrish- Assistant Head
- Miss Churchman- Assistant Head
- Mrs Tait - Governor with responsibility for attendance

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

**Date of Policy**

11<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Signed .....** **Chair of Governors**

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I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at School A.

Signed:

Child's Name:

Year: