****St** Andrew’s School

A school with Quaker values

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**The St Andrew’s School Trust is a Registered Charity No. 1129232**

Attendance

Policy

Last reviewed date: Autumn Term 2021

Adopted by Trustees date: 22nd November 2021

Next review date: Autumn Term 2022

**Introduction/Aim**

* Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. [Research](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.
* At St Andrew’s School we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised, and motivated adults. We value all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, Behaviour and Special Educational Needs. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
* As St Andrew’s School deals predominantly with students who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and associated anxiety, some of whom have been out of an education environment for a length of time, we understand that attending school full time immediately on starting at the school may be neither realistic nor possible, and we will work with parents to ensure that their child attends as much as possible. This may mean that transition times will be longer than in a mainstream setting, but these will be reviewed regularly with parents with the aim to reach a full-time timetable as quickly as possible. We will aim for all students to be attending full time within six weeks of starting at the school.

**Legal Framework**

* Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
* Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
* The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student was:
* Present;
* Absent;
* Present at an approved educational activity; or
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

**Definitions**

* For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

* Arrival at school after the register has closed
* Not attending school for any reason

Regular attendance as:

* Attendance at every session the school is open to students unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

* An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
* Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
* Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
* An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause
* An absence due to a transition timetable being in place and the child either not expected to attend on that day or arriving after registers have closed.

An “unauthorised absence” as:

* Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
* Truancy before or during the school day
* Absences which have never been properly explained
* Arrival at school after the register has closed
* Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
* Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
* Leaving school for no reason during the day
* Refusal to come to school
* Anxiety which could include school refusal which is not backed up by medical evidence

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

* Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

“Parent” as

* Any natural parent, whether married or not
* Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
* Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

**Categorising Absence and Attendance**

* The table below shows the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with the regulations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present at School** | |
| / \ | Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm |
| L | Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A student arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate. |
| **Attendance codes for when students are present at approved off-site educational activity** | |
| B | Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when students are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised, and measures have been taken to safeguard students. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a student is at home doing schoolwork. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual students. The school should record the student’s absence using the relevant absence code. |
| D | Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of students at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the student was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are students who are attending a student referral unit, a hospital school, or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the student is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the student’s attendance and absence for those sessions that the student is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner. |
| J | At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education, or transfer to another educational establishment. |
| P | Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a student is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. |
| V | Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school. |
| W | Work experience. Work experience is for students in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual students. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code. |
| **Absence codes when students are not present in school** | |
| C | Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. |
| E | Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a student to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded student from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made, they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code. |
| H | Holiday authorised by the school. Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher’s discretion. |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors’ notes. |
| M | Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. |
| R | Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents’ religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. |
| S | Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 students during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise. |
| T | Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.  This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.  To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school. |
| **Unauthorised Absence from School** | |
| G | Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. |
| N | Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a student’s absence. When the reason for the student’s absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a student’s attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation). |
| O | Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised. |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. |
| **Administrative Codes** | |
| X | Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend. |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a student is unable to attend because:  • The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or  • The transport provided by the school, or a local authority is not available and where the student’s home is not within walking distance; or  • A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student from attending school.  This code can also be used where a student is unable to attend because:  • The student is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the student is attending educational activities, then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).  This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes. |
| Z | Student not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of students joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put students on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school*.* |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations. |

**Leave of Absence**

* Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance means that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.
* We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for their child due to ‘exceptional circumstances.’ At St Andrew’s School, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are ‘exceptional circumstances’. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. St Andrew’s School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.
* Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. St Andrew’s School will treat each application individually and discuss with parents the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised.**  In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or prosecution considered.
* A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -
* The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
* An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
* A longer period of time is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.
* When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a student fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible Children Missing Education procedures being instigated.

**Student Absence for the Purposes of Religious Observance**

* St Andrew’s School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and are recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the student absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

**Unauthorised Absence**

* Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. That decision is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:
* A student’s/family member’s birthday
* Shopping for uniforms
* Arrangements or appointments for cutting the student’s hair
* Closure of a sibling’s school for INSET (or other purposes)
* An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
* A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the student is actually considered well enough to attend
* Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

**Persistent Absence**

A student becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 36 sessions (18 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child’s educational prospects.

The attendance of all students at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates’ Court of failing to secure their child’s regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1,000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2,500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

**Late Arrival at School**

At St Andrew’s School most students arrive by individual taxis and are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

The school day begins at 9.00am. The school register will be taken at 9.15am. All students arriving after this time will be met by one of the office staff and taken to their classroom. If their arrival is before 9.30am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.30am. All students arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents and Norfolk County Council transport will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a student arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

**Deletions from the Register**

* In accordance with the Regulations, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | Where the student is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability, and aptitude otherwise than at school. |
| B | **Change of school**  Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the student should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he/she has been registered as a student at another school. |
| C | Where a student is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he/she has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion. |
| D | **Home education**  In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he/she has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the student is receiving education otherwise than at school. |
| E | **Moved away**  Except in the case of a boarder that he/she has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered. |
| F | In the case of a student granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that —  (i) the student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;  (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and  (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is |
| G | That he/she is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age. |
| H | That he/she has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and  (i) at no time was his/her absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);  (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and  (iii) The proprietor of the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is. |
| I | That he/she is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return to the school at the end of that period. |
| J | That the student has died. |
| K | That the student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and—  (i) the relevant person has indicated that the student will cease to attend the school; or  (ii) The student does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school’s sixth form |
| L | In the case of a student at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college, or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he/she has ceased to be a student at the school. |
| M | **Permanent exclusion.** That he/she has been permanently excluded from the school. |
| N | Where the student has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, which he/she has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school. |
| O | Where—  (i) the student is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;  (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the student; and  (iii) Those charges remain unpaid by the student’s parent at the end of the school term to which they relate |

St Andrew’s School will follow Norfolk County Council’s Children Missing Education procedures when a student’s whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

At St Andrew’s School, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by trustees, school staff, parents, students, and the wider school community.

The Trustees of St Andrew’s School will:

* Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
* Annually review the school’s Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
* Identify a member of the Trust to lead on attendance matters; at the present time this is Joanne Davis
* Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
* Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through regular reporting at Trustees’ meetings
* Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance; at the present time this is Julie Jackson
* Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
* Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Senior Management Team (SMT) at St Andrew’s School will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
* Form positive relationships with students and parents
* Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
* Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
* Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
* Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources; at the present time this is Julie Jackson
* Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
* Report the school’s attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the Trustees and on a more regular basis to the lead Trustee for attendance; at the present time this is Joanne Davis
* Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site, are implemented
* Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
* Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

All staff at St Andrew’s School will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
* Form positive relationships with students and parents
* Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
* Comply with the Regulations and other relevant legislation
* Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
* Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
* Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
* Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families

Students will:

* Be aware of the school’s attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable
* Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
* Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class
* Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
* Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child’s individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

The SMT will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

* Monitoring and analysing student attendance data
* Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members
* Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance
* Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
* Managing individual student casework files
* Coordinating Individual Action Plans for students causing concern, including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) and/or the implementation of a parenting contract
* Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents
* Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as reward schemes to promote good attendance
* Making referrals to appropriate external agencies

St Andrew’s School requests that parents will:

* Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress
* Ensure their child has regular attendance at school
* Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
* Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible
* Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
* Support the school by becoming involved in their child’s education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
* Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
* Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues

**Attendance Protocols**

If a child is absent, the following will be initiated by the school:

* The first day calling procedures will be activated for all students who are not in school after close of register at 9.30am and where no reason for absence is known
* If there is still no contact made from the student’s parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child’s named emergency contact will be telephoned
* If school cannot make contact with a parent and are concerned about a student, a home visit may be carried out

In certain circumstances the school may also:

* Visit the home of the student or request a welfare check to be made by the police
* Write to the parents of a student to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
* Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
* Request parental permission to access GP records if there are a high number of illness related absences
* Refer to an external agency/support service to offer support, guidance, and advice
* Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
* Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
* Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or referring to Children Services, where there are safeguarding concerns

**Expected Absence Procedure for Parents:**

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to:

* Contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return
* If no contact is received, the Attendance protocols will be instigated

**Absence Related to Coronavirus**

**Attendance expectations**

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

* parents’ duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered student
* schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
* the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct
* the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

**Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19**

**Students who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Students who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a student tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

If the student remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness).

If a student tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the student tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

**Students who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Students who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test and should only self-isolate if they test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19. If they do test positive, they should self-isolate until the date that they are given by Track and Trace.

**Students who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a student is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

**Students who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test**

In line with public health advice, students with symptoms must self-isolate and school will strongly encourage students to take a PCR test. Where the student is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the student as code X in the register.

The school will follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the student is not in school. The school can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance).

**Remote education**

If a student is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. The school will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

**Support Systems**

School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family’s life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

* Discussion with parents and students
* Student Voice Activities
* Friendship groups
* 1 to 1 mentoring
* Reward systems
* Additional learning support
* Behaviour support
* Reintegration support packages
* Attendance panels
* Parenting contracts
* Engaging the support of other agencies

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Headteacher will consider the use of legal sanctions following consultation with the Local Authority.

**Attendance Procedure and Reward System**

The school will follow the following procedures with regards to students’ attendance:

* If a student is absent and no explanation has been given a phone call will be made to parents to ascertain the reason for absence; if parents cannot be contacted a phone call will be made to emergency contacts.
* If no contact can be made to ascertain the whereabouts of the student a home visit may be made.
* The school will record the absence in the calendar according to the definitions as set out earlier in this policy.
* Attendance will be monitored on at least a monthly basis, and absence concerns will be discussed at the weekly SMT meeting as well as reported to Trustees.
* Communication will be made with parents if attendance dips below 95% to discuss interventions to stop attendance falling further.
* Any transitional timetables in place will be reviewed every 2 weeks with parents with a view to the student attending full time as soon as possible.
* The school will inform the Local Authority if attendance continues to be an issue and, in all circumstances, will notify them if attendance is below 90%.
* Once attendance falls below 90%, they may be considered for fast track or fixed penalty notice if appropriate.
* The school does not encourage term time holidays as they have longer half term breaks in order to facilitate the option of parents being able to take their children on holiday during less busy periods; therefore, any requests for holiday will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
* Where persistent absence persists despite interventions being in place, the school will work with the local authority and EHCP co-ordinators to decide whether they are able to meet the needs of the child. This may ultimately result in cessation of the student’s place at St Andrew’s School

The school will implement the following Reward system to encourage good attendance by the students:

* At the end of each half term all students who have attendance of 95% or above will receive a certificate for good attendance. Those who have achieved 100% attendance will receive an Amazon voucher for £5.
* At the end of the year those students who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole academic year will receive an Amazon voucher for £20 and a framed certificate
* Students will not be penalised for medical appointments which relate to their ASD or in the case of Looked After Children (LAC) yearly medical assessments.

**Related Policies**

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that students at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

* safeguarding including child protection
* admissions
* anti-bullying
* behaviour
* special educational needs

**Statutory Framework**

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

* School attendance, DfE (2016)
* School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance, DfE (revised March 2017)
* Norfolk County Council Children Missing Education Practice & Procedures
* ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, DfE (2019)

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 Fixed Penalty Notice Letter

Appendix 2 Leave of Absence Form

**Appendix 1: Fixed Penalty Notice Letter**

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Attendance at school and legal intervention**

[Research](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At St Andrew’s School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our students receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances, and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any student will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions[[1]](#footnote-1) of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any student at St Andrew’s School who meets either of the criteria will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates’ Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Carol Keable

Headteacher

**Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Form**

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| **ST ANDREW’S SCHOOL** |
| **APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME** |
| **Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress** |
| Full name of child(ren)  Address  Leave requested from\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total number of school days \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Reason for application: |
| **I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.**  Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Headteachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Headteacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not. |
| Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.  Signature of Headteacher \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carer of the student to confirmauthorisation.

**Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Form**

**Leave of Absence During Term Time**

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the schools Headteacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student’s education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT’s.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child’s education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student’s records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates’ Court.

|  |
| --- |
| **Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child’s school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.** |

**Fixed Penalty Notices**

With the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for, or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

**The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.**

**The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court.**

\*(Academic year =school year from September to July)

1. Please note that the school day consists of 2 sessions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)