ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

ST. LUKE & ST. PHILIP'S PRIMARY, A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



VISION STATEMENT

'The family of St Luke and St Philip's will ensure excellence is encouraged, minds are opened, diversity is embraced, respect is expected and talents are nurtured under the umbrella of God's love.'

ETHOS

Our school provides grounding in the Christian Faith for all its children with emphasis on collective worship as part of its daily life. Our Christian values of trust, truth, love, peace and thankfulness are built into the ethos and teaching of our school with the support of all Governors and staff for its Christian foundation. We also seek to encourage an understanding and respect for other world faiths.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL VALUES





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Attendance and Punctuality

Policy 2026-2027

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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

School census guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education

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The Attendance Team at St Luke & St Philip's

Mr Colin Walton – Headteacher

Mrs Tracey Etchells - Pupil Wellbeing Lead/Attendance Lead

Miss Lucy Beecroft – Attendance Admin

Roles and responsibilities

The governing committee

The governing committee is responsible for:

● Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

● Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

● Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

● Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

● Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

● Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

● The school attendance officer meets with the headteacher to inform governors on a termly basis to review attendance throughout the school.

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, if necessary

The Attendance Lead / Pupil Wellbeing Lead

The school Attendance Lead is responsible for:

● Leading attendance across the school

● Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

● Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

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● Having an oversight of data analysis

● Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

● Working with the BwD Inclusion Team to advise them of individual pupil's poor attendance.

● Discussing attendance concerns with the Inclusion officer linked to the school during a termly meeting.

● Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures

● Making referrals to the Inclusion Team when all attempts of promoting attendance has not been successful.

● Completing paperwork relevant to the role such as: Child Missing in Education (CME), in year transfers, deletion from role etc.

● Arranging meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

● Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

● Monitoring and analysing attendance data

● Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

● Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher

● Working with the Blackburn with Darwen Inclusion team to tackle persistent absence

● Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

● Work with external agencies e.g. Family Support Workers, Social Workers, Lead Professionals to inform them of the child's attendance and work together to improve this

The attendance Lead is **Tracey Etchells** and can be contacted via tracey.etchells@cidari.co.uk / School office Tel: 01254

The Admin Manager

The Admin Manager is responsible for:

● To work closely with the Attendance lead to monitor and analyse our school attendance data

● Working with the Inclusion Officer, and Attendance Officer/Pupil and Family Support Worker to tackle persistent absence

● Supporting the designated senior leader in leading attendance across school

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The Attendance Admin is **Lucy Beecroft** and can be contacted via email slspoffice@cidari.co.uk School office Tel:01254 54866

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

● Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. The register for the morning session opens at 8:55am and closes at 9:15am. The register for the afternoon session opens at 1pm and closes at 1:15pm.

● Following this policy by modelling their own good attendance and ensuring pupils do too.

● Work with the Attendance Lead to monitor individual attendance concerns.

● Promoting a positive culture of good attendance throughout the school and as part of their lessons/daily Worship.

● Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

● Discussing attendance concerns at parents' evenings where necessary.

● Discuss any concerns with the school Attendance Lead.

● Reporting any patterns/ absence concerns to the Attendance Officer/Pupil and Family Support Worker and where appropriate as safeguarding concerns.

Attendance Admin

The school **Attendance Admin** will:

● Recording details of children who arrive late for school

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

● Transfer calls from parents to the school Attendance officer Attendance Admin Worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

● Work with the school Attendance officer and Attendance Adminto conduct first-day call-backs/ send appropriate communication to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent

● Report any absence concerns to the school Attendance officer Attendance Admin

The Attendance Admin is **Lucy Beecroft**and can be contacted via email staoffice@cidari.co.uk School office Tel:01254 53148

Parents/carers

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Parents/carers are expected to:

● Make sure their child attends every day, and on time.

● Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55 am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

● Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

● 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

● Provide school with medical evidence of any appointments that have not been able to be made out of school hours.

● Ensuing that family holidays are not taken within term time

● Keep school updated with changes to contact details.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

● Be in school every day.

The Inclusion Officer (Blackburn with Darwen)

The role of the inclusion officer is to work in partnership with school through a termly meetings to monitor impact of attendance strategies. When the final stage of the attendance escalation plan has been reached, it is the responsibility of the inclusion officer to utilise legal powers to enforce school attendance.

Definitions

Authorised absence

● An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

● Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

● An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without a reason for absence provided.

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● A child's absence will be unauthorised if the reason provided does provide a good reason to be absent from school.

Persistent Absences

A child's attendance is classed as persistently absent when it falls below 90%. Please note that the Local Authority may take legal action, please see the section 'Penalty Notices'

Severely Absent

A child's attendance is classed as severely absent when it is at or below 50%. Please note that the Local Authority may take legal action, please see the section 'Penalty Notices'

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising the Council to issue penalty notices where parents and/or carers are considered capable of, but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance.

Penalty notices are part of a range of enforcement measures to tackle poor school attendance. Under current legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are unauthorised.

Depending on the circumstances, parents/carers may be prosecuted in the local Magistrates Court, in accordance with the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice aims to quickly improve a child's attendance at school and is an alternative to prosecution. Parents/carers do not need to go to court unless they do not pay the penalty within 28 days.

Full payment of the penalty means parents/carers are no longer liable to conviction i.e. it should be the end of the matter. It also prevents them from acquiring a criminal record, unless further offences are committed.

Penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

● Inappropriate absences that parents have allowed

● Unapproved leave of absence taken in term-time or delayed return from an authorised leave of absence without obtaining advance permission from the school

● Persistent late arrival at school after closure of registers

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● When the parents of a formally excluded pupil fail in their duty to ensure that he/she is not in a public place during school hours (without reasonable justification).

LA Reporting:

15-Day (I code): Schools must make a "sickness return" to the Local Authority if a child is absent, or is expected to be absent, for 15 consecutive or cumulative school days over the academic year due to illness. This is not to penalise the parents; it is a statutory requirement to ensure the Local Authority can step in and provide alternative educational support (like home tutoring or specialised provision) so the child does not fall behind.

10-Session (O code) Threshold: If a child accrues 10 sessions (which equals 5 full school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, the school must report this to the Local Authority. This specific threshold triggers the council to consider issuing a Penalty Notice (fine) to the parents. This can include unauthorised term-time holidays or simply arriving very late (after the register has closed) multiple times.

Warning of a penalty notice

See Appendix 1 for Flow Chart of Penalty Notices

A parent/carer may sometimes receive a written warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued. This will give you a period of time to improve his/her attendance. During this period, the child must have no further unauthorised absences from school. If he/she is ill during that time, medical evidence must be provided.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning of a possible penalty notice can be issued in any particular case, but it's highly unlikely that a parent/carer will receive more than three warnings per child in any one year before further action is taken.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but if you receive a formal written warning, you can write or speak to the Local Authority about your situation should you wish.

Costs

Penalty notices are issued at £160 per child per parent and should be paid within 28 days. They can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at a higher rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.

Payments

Details of payment arrangements will be included with the penalty notice. You cannot pay part of a penalty notice or pay it in instalments. The Government say it must be paid in full and your ability to pay is not something which the law allows us to consider.

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You have up to 28 days from receiving the penalty notice to pay it in full. If you don't, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against you in the local Magistrates Court. These proceedings will be for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

If the case against you is proven, the Magistrates can fine you up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or jail you for up to 51 weeks. Magistrates can also make Parenting Orders, Community Orders and Education Supervision Orders, depending upon individual circumstances.

Following payment of the penalty notice

Parents/carers are not liable for prosecution for their child's school attendance once the penalty notice is paid. However, prosecution may be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an ongoing issue, it is vital that parents/carers work closely with their child's school and the inclusion team.

Registration

The gates to the playground open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance and the register will be completed by 9am daily.

Punctuality

Any children that arrive after 8.55am will need to access school through the school office. For children arriving between 8.55am and 9.25am will receive a late mark using code 'L'.

For children that arrive to school after 9.25am their attendance will be unauthorised for the AM session using code 'U'. Please note that code U affects a child's overall attendance and will be flagged up in the three weekly attendance monitoring reports completed by the Attendance Lead.

Punctuality is also monitored, parents will receive communication if their child is late more than 3 times during a half term. If the child is late 5 times in a half term, parents will be called by Attendance Lead.

to see if any support is necessary.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Appointments

We would like to politely ask that all medical appointments are booked out of school hours. However, we do appreciate that at times this cannot be avoided and would request that we have been provided medical evidence of this appointment. Medical appointments will be

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recorded using code ‘M’. Without this evidence, we are unable to authorise this absence from school.

Absence Procedure

For information regarding absences please refer to the guidance from the NHS “Is my child too ill for school”

Parents/carers are required to report absences by 8:55am each day of their child’s absence. If children are absent for more than one day we ask that parents contact school on a daily basis to report their child’s absence and to update school.

Absences can be reported by calling the school office on 01254 54866

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child’s absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Attendance Lead has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised ensuring that the child is safeguarded at all times.

If a child is absent from school and parents have failed to report this to school, the Attendance Lead will contact parents in order of priority contacts to gain a reason for absence. If we are unable to contact parents the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using code ‘U’ and where necessary and deemed appropriate a home visit may be conducted.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

In line with the local and government guidance head teachers are unable to authorise any holiday or leave of absence during term time. Head teachers can only authorise any leave of absence if the circumstances are deemed as exceptional. We would like to ask parents/carers that they do not take their child out of education by requesting holidays during term time.

Legal action can be taken and parents/carers can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time.

As a school, we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is in line with the Blackburn with Darwen Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:

● £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to

● £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

This penalty notice will be issued to each parent or anyone with parental responsibility even if they do not also attend the holiday with the child.

Children Missing In Education (CME)

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Children missing in education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing in education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

At St Luke & St Philip's our Attendance Lead contacts our Inclusion Officer if we are unable to establish a reason for a child's absence following three school days with no contact. This can be sooner if we feel the child could be at risk. If a child has been absent from school for ten school days, the Attendance Lead will complete a child missing in education referral to the Local Authority.

Children are not removed from the school register until notification is received from the receiving school or a formal written letter is presented from parent stating the reason the child has been withdrawn from school.

Addressing attendance concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

When a child's attendance begins to cause concern, the following process will be followed:

1. Letter 1 – Informing parents that their child's attendance has fallen below our 96% expectation and is a cause for concern. Attendance will be monitored for a three-week period for improvement to be made.
2. Letter 2 –. Parents will then be invited into school for a meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss attendance and implement a support plan.
3. Letter 3 – Informing parents that their child's attendance will be referred to the BwD Inclusion Team as their child's attendance has continued to decline. This letter will outline that a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

Promoting Regular Attendance

We actively encourage and promote good attendance throughout school. We treat attendance as everyone's responsibility. Some of the strategies we use for improving and rewarding attendance include:

● Attendance is discussed with parents and children that are new to our school.

● Attendance is discussed with parents during our parents evening consultations.

● Our whole school attendance board is visibly displayed in the Reception, and each class has the child's picture on the board depending on their weekly attendance.

● We celebrate class weekly attendance winners during celebration worship. The winners receive a certificate for the week displayed on their door, and attendance sticker

● Attendance news is shared two weekly on our newsletter.

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● Leaders meet and greet children in the yard at the start of the day. Teachers meet and greet children at classroom doors. We do this to ensure that all children get positive interaction early in the day.

● Planning engaging lessons, linked to an enriching curriculum, that ensures there are many wider opportunities planned for the children such as a range of trips and visits, special themed days in school and visitors from outside agencies.

● Termly all children with 100% receive a prize, certificate and sticker. They also get a raffle ticket to go in the box for a chance to win a bike and helmet at the end of the academic year.

● Sending well done letters when attendance improves.

● Early morning calls daily for targeted families.

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