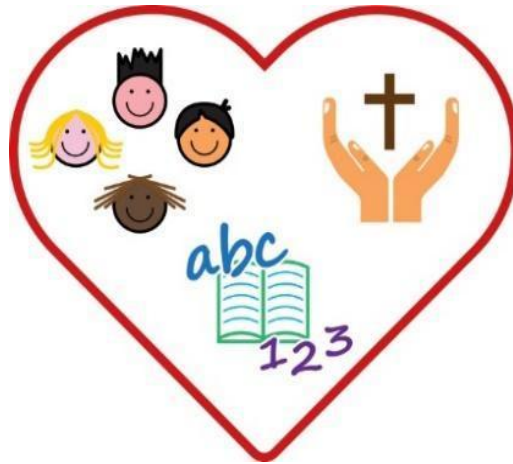


ST. MATTHEW'S C.E. PRIMARY ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed: 23rd September 2024
By: N. Naik

Date of next review: September 2025

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy
Attendance Policy

Mission Statement:

St. Matthew's C.E. Primary School and Nursery is dedicated to providing an education which enables every child to fulfil their best potential. It seeks to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment, welcoming children drawn from diverse cultures.

Vision Statement:

Inspired by Jesus' words (Matthew 5: 1-12), we strive to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment for all members of our school family.
We can all **'Be blessed by God, be happy and aspire to be...'**

**ST MATTHEWS C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY
WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Rationale

At St Matthew's C of E Primary School and Nursery we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for children. We will encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.

Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school.

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

Aims

We will

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school; including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual, vulnerable groups and whole school attendance levels.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

We will develop a procedural framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for

- Parents and carers
- Pupils
- School staff

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

- Governors

to complement this policy, and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

This procedural framework will include guidance on

- Registration
- Punctuality
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Leave of absence
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual pupils
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Pupil Attendance Support Team and School Attendance Consultant
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and action planning
- Appropriate alternative curricular arrangements

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. In St Matthews C of E Primary Academy the head teacher is the person authorised by the 'proprietor' (i.e. the governing body), to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings.

Leave of absence **SHALL NOT** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance, by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** relating to the request.

Additional information regarding leave of absence is included with the procedural framework.

Religious Absence

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, (i.e. the day set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member) and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Use of Penalty Notices

In accordance with the current Lancashire code of conduct, St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will request that the local authority issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made; and leave taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the leave is taken regardless of this advice. St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will also request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave; without good reason. Parents also risk losing their child's school place if they do not return from leave, as agreed, and readmission cannot be guaranteed.

Partnership Working

St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will work with the Pupil Attendance Support Team, the School Attendance Consultant and other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

school. The criteria for referral and areas of responsibility for staff will be set out in the procedural framework.

Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning

St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil, groups of pupils and whole school level. We will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters.

Persistent Absence

The minimum attendance level which is expected at our school is 96%. It is when attendance falls below this level that school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support to improve the situation. Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of pupils who fall into the persistent absence category (PA). A pupil is on track to becoming a persistent absentee when their attendance falls to 90% or below at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level children miss significant amounts of schooling; meaning that their educational progress is put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. However, if for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category parents will be asked to do all they can to improve the situation. Parent's whose children's attendance falls below the 91%, will be monitored and will on occasions get home visits, giving them information about the importance of coming to school and a shortened attendance policy.

Families will be supported in this via the school's robust systems for managing PA. This support can be through the early help for parents, and children of an appropriate age, to agree to an attendance contract. Due to the seriousness of PA status, such cases could be referred to a Local Authority Attendance Consultant (which is part of the Academies Pupil Attendance Support Team). We will also consider involving external agencies to assist us in finding resolutions to any issues which may be behind an attendance concern.

Furthermore, absence data for individual pupils who are classed as persistent absentees are reported to the Department for Education; along with whole school absence figures.

Monitoring the Attendance of Pupils Who Are Educated Off Site

The attendance of all pupils who are educated off site, or those who are dual registered, will be monitored in accordance with the procedures outlined within the procedural framework.

Review of Whole School Attendance Policy

St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will review this policy and the associated procedural framework annually.

Last review date: September 2024

Next review date: September 2025 (or sooner if required)

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

This document forms part of St Matthews C of E Primary Academy's whole school attendance policy. It sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for parents/carers, pupils, school staff and governors; and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

St Matthews C of E Primary Academy believes that it is important that parents and carers, pupils, school staff and governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parents and Carers

- Ensure the child(ren) in their care attend school regularly and punctually
- If the child(ren) is/are absent to inform the school office or class teacher on the first day of absence and provide a reason for the absence
- If the child(ren) is/are absent for more than one day, to inform the school office of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly
- Ensure that school have up to date contact details and at least two emergency contacts who can be contacted in the event that parents are unavailable
- To avoid leave in term time wherever possible. Where this is not thought possible, contact the school as soon as possible prior to the first proposed day of absence to request authorisation and prior to making any financial commitment
- To advise the school, by contacting the school office, immediately if they become aware of problems with attendance
- To co-operate with the school in promoting and improving attendance e.g. attending meetings, participation in attendance contracts and supporting the school in agreed intervention/action plans
- Adhere to systems for late registration, signing out and signing in

Pupils

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Adhere to systems for late registration, signing out and signing in
- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school to ensure good attendance e.g. early bedtimes and getting uniforms ready the night before

School Staff

The head teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate. The head teacher is also responsible for liaison with individual families, the School Attendance Consultant and the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST) to ensure appropriate support is given where attendance concerns are identified and for liaison with the local authority and DfE to ensure that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

However, St Matthews C of E Primary Academy believes that all staff have responsibilities and a role to play in promoting good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children
- Providing a safe learning environment
- Ensuring an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- Being aware of the role all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils and parents

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

- Adherence to the systems and procedures in place within school to promote good attendance and highlighting any concerns to the head teacher
- Participation in training regarding school systems and procedures
- Willingness to communicate with children and parents about attendance
- Completion of the attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher

Some staff will have specific individual responsibilities to support the attendance policy and these are outlined in the procedures section of this framework.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
- Adopt an attendance policy and review it annually
- Agree targets for attendance at St Matthews C of E Primary Academy
- Ensure that they receive reports from the head teacher regarding school attendance and persistent absence as part of the school monitoring or school profiling exercise
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, to require a review of the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance
- To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and pupils where appropriate and ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests
- Work with the head teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent

Procedures

Registration

Morning Registration is between 08.50am and 9.05am

Afternoon Registration is between 12:45 & 12:50 (Reception & KS1), 13:15 & 13:20 (KS2)

Nursery take their register at the start of each session.

Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for marking children present or absent on the electronic register in the morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed promptly to avoid discrepancies between classes. The class teacher must ensure that the marked register, plus any notes received regarding absence, is returned to the school office by 9.05am/12:55 (Rec/KS1)/13:25 (KS2).

Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for entering attendance on the electronic register and the office staff for inputting absence codes on a daily basis.

Late Registration

Pupils requiring admittance to school following registration periods must go to the main entrance and request entry via the school office. For health and safety reasons parents **MUST** accompany late arriving pupils into the building in order to sign their children into school.

The school office is responsible for maintaining the parents sign their children in using the electronic system. This must contain details of name, class, time admitted/time released, reason for lateness/early departure and name of supervising adult. For health and safety reasons, after

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

9.05am/12:55/13:25 an entry **MUST** be put into the electronic system before a pupil is admitted or released.

Morning Registration is between 08.50am and 9.05am and then registers are closed.

Afternoon Registration is between 12:45 & 12:50 (Reception & KS1), 13:15 & 13:20 (KS2)

Any children who are registered after these times will be marked late (L), which means they are present at school but arrived late.

Any children who arrive after 9.30am will be registered as an unauthorised (U) mark. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session. If a child arrives after 12.50pm (Reception and KS1) or 13.20pm (KS2) they will be registered as an unauthorised absence (U).

In addition to using the L and U codes, office staff will record how many minutes they are late if the child has a U. The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling, putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures, in just the same way.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to aim to understand the reasons behind absence – we believe that this is an important stage in resolving attendance issues.

In every instance it is the head teacher who determines whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is made based on information provided by parents/carers. However, because the register is a legal document, the head teacher has responsibility to ensure that it is completed accurately and in accordance with the legislation. For this reason it is not sufficient for an absence to be recorded as authorised based entirely on information provided by parents/carers. Therefore, there may be occasions when it will be necessary for parents to provide evidence of reasons for absence before authorisation is granted. For example, in the case of absence due to illness or medical appointment, evidence may be requested in the form of: sight of a prescription, prescribed medication, a medical appointment card or similar.

The school office is responsible for maintaining records of reason and length of absence.

- Parents/Carers are required to contact the school office or class teacher on the first day of absence, advising of the reason for the absence and expected return date; if known
- Where information is provided to the class teacher they are responsible for passing this information to the school office
- Where a verbal message is taken by school office staff this should be noted in the register and the class teacher informed
- Where a written note is received by the class teacher this should be returned to the school office with the register
- Where the absence is for several days, the parent/carer is responsible for informing the school of the continued absence and updating them as to the reason for the absence on a regular basis
- Where no explanation for absence is provided, or the reason provided is unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be addressed with parents promptly
- Schools have a responsibility to report such absence to the local authority after a period of 10 school days, or sooner if appropriate
- The reason for absence should be linked directly to the pupil (e.g. illness or medical appointment of/for the child). Reasons for absence relating to parents or siblings may not be authorised

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the family, the school office will contact the family on the first day of absence, as the registers close at 9.30am. If contact cannot be made, school will try to contact the people named as emergency contacts. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Our school will request emergency contact numbers from the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. If no contact is possible with any of the emergency contacts, the head teacher should be informed and consideration made whether to request/undertake a welfare/home visit. In the case of prolonged or repeated absence without justification being given, the head teacher will determine whether a consultation will take place with the Attendance Consultant.

The head teacher is responsible for determining what is classed as authorised and what is classed as unauthorised absence.

Examples of authorised absence:

- Medical or dental appointments, which relate directly to the pupil and unavoidably fall during the school day (evidence may be required prior to authorisation)
- Illness of the pupil (evidence may be required prior to authorisation)
- Leave which has been authorised by the head teacher due to exceptional circumstances

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- 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 after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and leave in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the head teacher

The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register. Where they are not certain whether an absence is authorised or not they should seek advice from the head teacher.

Office staff may also use the comments facility within the system in order to log specific reasons for absence. This facility will allow school staff to monitor and manage developing patterns of absence more effectively and share such information with parents.

Signing Out

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedure for releasing children where parents/carers have requested and been granted leave during the school day.

The child(ren) can only be released to a parent or authorised carer/family member. When an authorised adult is picking up a child within school time the school office is responsible for ensuring that they (the authorised adult) complete and sign the school electronic system (see above for details of requirements). The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register, where appropriate.

When a child leaves the school site after the morning or afternoon register has been taken, the original mark must remain in the register and the electronic system should be referred to during an evacuation situation to ensure all pupils can be accounted for.

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. In St

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

Matthews C of E Primary Academy the head teacher is the person authorised by the 'proprietor' i.e. the governing body, to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings.

Leave of absence **SHALL NOT** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance, by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** relating to the request.

Additional Factors for Consideration

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Regular attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The local authority expects that all parents/carers ensure their children attend school whenever possible. Absence during school time is largely prohibited by regulation and hinders academic progress. Even in exceptional circumstances, the following factors may be taken into account when considering an application for leave:

- Will leave at this point in time be detrimental to the pupil's education?
- Will he/she miss any national tests or examinations?
- Is his/her attendance a cause for concern?
- Is the proposed absence during the month of September or any other transition period?
- Has he/she already had leave during term time this year?
- Did he/she have leave of absence during term time in the previous school year(s)?
- Does he/she have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?

If work commitments are stated as supporting evidence towards an exceptional reason for requesting leave, parents will be asked to provide employer details and any additional evidence which shows why leave cannot be taken during the school holidays

Parents/Carers who need to request leave during term time should complete an application form, available from the school office as soon as possible prior to the first proposed date of absence. Parents are asked to provide any relevant information regarding this request on the form if they believe the circumstances are exceptional. Information provided after a decision has been made may not be considered. The Head teacher will consider the request and advise in writing within 5 days whether the absence will be authorised or not. The head teacher or deputy head will request a meeting with parents before any period of leave is authorised.

Use of Penalty Notices

The school takes unauthorised absence seriously and, particularly in the case of repeated unauthorised absences, will undertake further liaison with the family, pupil, the School Attendance Consultant and the Pupil Attendance Support Team as appropriate. Furthermore, St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will request that the local authority issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes leave which is taken without a prior request being made; and leave taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the leave is taken regardless of this advice. St Matthews C of E Primary Academy will also request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave, without good reason. Parents also risk losing their child's school place if they do not return from leave, as agreed, and readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The school office is responsible for recording leave requests in the electronic register and will retain copies of correspondence regarding requested leave of absence for 3 years. They will also be responsible for highlighting to the head teacher if absence continues after the notified period. In this instance the head teacher will undertake further liaison with the family, pupil, the School Attendance

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

Consultant and the Pupil Attendance Support Team as appropriate and a Penalty Notice will be considered.

Monitoring, Analysis and Action Planning

The governors have determined that the head teacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring, analysis and action planning of school attendance. The head teacher is also responsible for ensuring that data is returned promptly to the local authority and DfE within deadlines. However, it is expected that the day to day implementation of this will largely rest with the class teachers who take the register and highlight causes of concern and the school office who are responsible for maintaining the school records on attendance and for highlighting causes for concern.

The head teacher will review the attendance records at least once every half term to check that there are no outstanding causes for concern and that codes are being used consistently. In addition, the attendance lead will address specific concerns as they arise.

The head teacher is required to review this whole school attendance policy and procedural framework annually and to report on attendance matters to the governors termly. The governors will also review the attendance policy at least annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school.

If there is a trend of worsening attendance in a particular group of pupils, including pupils who belong to any vulnerable group, discussions should be held between the head teacher and appropriate staff to agree action plans to reverse the trend. It should also be reported to the governors at the next full governor's meeting.

St Matthews C of E Primary Academy also uses whole school incentive and reward schemes in order to raise the profile of, and promote good levels of attendance. These schemes will be reviewed and changed regularly in order to ensure that children remain interested and motivated.

Monitoring the Attendance of Pupils Who Are Educated Off Site

When pupils are **dual registered**, their registration status will acknowledge this. For sessions when a dual registered pupil is expected to attend St Matthews C of E Primary Academy the usual attendance procedures will be followed. When this pupil is expected to attend the other establishment our registers will display the D code (Dual Registration). As the **Main School** we retain responsibility for dual registered pupils. Therefore, the other establishment will be contacted regularly in order to ensure that this placement continues to be successful. When this is not the case, appropriate action will be taken. In cases where we are the **Subsidiary School** our normal first day absence procedures will be used and any concerns regarding attendance will be reported to the **Main School**. In addition, we will provide other information regarding attendance to the **Main School** on request.

When pupils are **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educationally Activity** school will decide which of the following codes is most suitable:

- Code B – Educated off site
- Code P – Supervised sporting activity
- Code V – Educational visit or trip

The head teacher is responsible for the pupil's education and wellbeing during these sessions. Therefore, before any of these codes are used school must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- ✓ The activity is broadly educational in nature

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy

- ✓ it is suitable for the pupil's age and ability
- ✓ it will complement the pupil's curriculum
- ✓ it is taking place during the session for which the approved off-site educational activity code is being used and
- ✓ suitable supervision and safeguarding arrangements are in place

Criteria and Systems for Referral to and Working with the School Attendance Consultant and the Pupil Attendance Support Team

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring consistent referral of regular or unjustified absence. The criteria for referral are outlined in the systems below:

A request for support will be made to the local authority attendance team (Pupil Attendance Support Team) when:

- School have informed parents of their concerns regarding attendance
- School have attempted to employ appropriate strategies in order to improve attendance
- School strategies have failed to prompt the required amount of improvement in attendance OR parents refuse to engage with school support

In addition to the above, the attendance lead can discuss general attendance or case specific matters with the School Attendance Consultant. The purpose of such discussions would be to:

- Monitor progress towards targets, highlighting any concerns and identifying any action required
- To receive guidance on latest best practice
- To receive information about local and national trends and benchmarking
- To discuss whether current attendance policy and procedures are effective
- To discuss case-specific actions and receive advice on future actions

In some instances, school may consider involving external agencies to support children and parents as appropriate with the aim of understanding the underlying issues which may be causing attendance concerns.

School System for Dealing with Concerns about Lateness and Absence

The school office is responsible for advising the head teacher of pupils who are persistently late or absent as issues arise.

The class teacher is also responsible for raising concerns about lateness or absence of class members to the head teacher as issues arise.

In addition, the attendance lead will use electronic systems to monitor the attendance of individual pupils at least once per half term.

Once concerns have been raised:

- The attendance lead will discuss the matter informally with the family (including the pupil)
- Parents and children, if appropriate, will be asked to agree to an attendance contract, or take part in attendance panels, which will include the setting of targets and will be reviewed regularly
- When persistent lateness is an issue and/or parents fail to follow procedures by not accompanying late arriving pupils into school to sign them in, this will be communicated to parents via letter or a meeting in school as appropriate
- If lateness/absence persists, and school procedures fail to promote the required level of improvement, the attendance lead will contact the Pupil Attendance Support Team who will attend meetings with the family and head teacher as appropriate and help school determine whether any further interventions are required. These interventions will include consideration of the use of legal measures (penalty notices and prosecution)
- Incentive and reward schemes will be used for individual pupils, as appropriate.

St Matthew's Church of England Primary Academy – Attendance policy Notifications to the Local Authority

Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire does not currently).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information as laid out in regulation.

Notifications of Pupils who Fail to Attend

All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire primary schools, this can be done via referral to the Pupil Attendance Support Team or a request for a Penalty Notice. Any other notifications not so covered can be submitted on an individual basis to the local authority.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting a pupil's name from the register if the whereabouts of the child are unknown. In these cases, school will undertake a home visit themselves, or request a home visit from PAST prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

Alternative Provision and Use of Directions

There are a range of reasons why pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are listed below:

- Pupils who have been excluded, either for a fixed period (for more than 5 days) or permanently
- When a pupil is unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons
- When a pupil is required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour; either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (managed move)

When a pupil is required to attend alternative provision, the governors of the main school must issue a written 'direction' or 'notice' informing all parents of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend.

Pupils Who Are Unable To Attend School for Medical Reasons

The introduction of statutory guidance on 1st September 2014 places much more emphasis on the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils; whether their condition is short or long term. The school will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be as a result of specific practices or resources used within school or by sourcing more appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this will always be done via the use of a direction or notice (please see the relevant section of this policy).

School System for Reintegrating Pupils Who Have Had Long Term Absence

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the head teacher, the class teacher and other support services will liaise with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

Pupils who are refusing to attend school:

At St Matthews C of E Primary Academy, we believe that every child has a right to a full time education and we will not accept 'school refusal' as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We will make referrals to external partners such as Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Early Help, Primary Mental Health Practitioners etc. as appropriate in a bid to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and their family.

Communication of Attendance Policy and Procedure

It is important that the school's policy on attendance is communicated to all the stakeholders and that parents, pupils and staff know the procedures and systems that are in place to implement it.

The governors have determined that:

- The attendance policy will be placed on the school website
- Details of the policy and the procedure for requesting absence in term time, and signing in and out of school will be disseminated as part of the new parent induction process e.g. induction package, talks to new parents
- Reference to the school attendance policy regarding leave during term time is to be made clear when the school calendar of dates is sent out each year
- Summary of responsibilities under the attendance policy will be contained in the home/school agreement
- Staff responsibilities will be contained in the staff handbook
- The head teacher will ensure that staff receive training regarding their responsibilities in relation to the attendance policy and procedures
- The attendance lead will provide a summary of attendance and causes for concern to the governors during termly meetings
- Details of the absence record of the school will be communicated as part of the school profile/prospectus
- Attendance and punctuality will be included in newsletters on a regular basis
- Attendance will be reported to parents termly via attendance traffic light letters and annually via the end of year report which will include a certificate of attendance, where applicable

