

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Loving God and each other

We work together to be the best we

can be.

Policy was reviewed:

Signed Governors:

Signed Headteacher:

Next Review Date:

Overview

St Silas primary Academy is committed to promoting excellent attendance and as part of our dedication to ensuring quality educational provision to give its pupils the best possible start in life. We believe attendance supports academic achievement, social development and a strong sense of belonging.

Aims of the attendance policy

- 1.To promote excellent attendance and punctuality so that all pupils can reach their full potential.**
- 2.Reducing unauthorised absence, including persistent and severe absence.**
- 3.To offer timely support, advice and guidance to parents facing challenges related to attendance.**
- 4.To raise awareness that poor attendance and punctuality is not acceptable and can affect the child's learning.**

Legislation and Guidance

- **[Education Act 1996](#)** The 1996 Education Act consolidated and updated laws concerning school standards, funding, and the roles of local authorities and governing bodies, establishing the modern legal framework for compulsory education in England and Wales.

[Education Act 2002](#): The 2002 Education Act made primary schools more independent and accountable to parents by establishing governing bodies as the key decision-makers and giving schools greater freedom over their budgets and curriculum.

- **[GOV.UK](#)** "Working together to improve school attendance": The Department for Education (DfE) guidance that sets out the framework for managing school attendance and is the basis for local authorities' codes of conduct.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher.

If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent/ carer must inform the school in person, in writing, or by telephone as soon as possible of the absence and the reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no accepted reason/explanation, or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

Appointments

Whenever possible, dental and non-urgent medical appointments should be arranged during school holiday or outside school hours. Pupils are expected to attend school before their appointment, leave in time to attend, and return to school promptly afterwards. Documentation for medical appointments need to be shown, for verification. This helps to minimise the impact on their overall attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Staff

- Are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, and enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.
- Know the attendance policy and be able to explain elements to parents if necessary
- Inform PFWC, or Attendance Lead of any concerns about children in their class.

Parents

- Parents must ensure their children attend school every day and on time.
- Parents must inform the school promptly of any absence and provide a valid reason for it, such as an illness.
- Avoid unnecessary absences e.g. take holidays in school holidays time.
- Seek support from the school if they are struggling to get their child to attend school, or if their child is anxious about attending school.

Pupils

- Must be on time for lessons and ready to learn.
- Be prepared for school, make sure you are rested for the day's learning
- Understand the importance of attendance and know that missing school will make it harder to learn.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupil & Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator

- Monitors attendance daily.
- Communicates with parents /guardian regarding pupil absence.
- Conducts regular home visits to address concerns related to poor attendance..
- Attends attendance and safeguarding meetings arranged by local authority professionals when attendance is a cause for concern.
- Arranges formal meetings with parents to discuss barriers to attendance and implement Early help plans and attendance contracts.
- Make referrals to the Inclusion officer from the local authority to improve attendance.

SLT and Attendance lead

- Engages with parents regarding persistent absentees through phone calls and face-to face meetings.
- Tracks and monitors whole school attendance to identify a pattern and areas of concern.
- Implements a reward system..
- To recognise and encourage good attendance.
- Work with the Inclusion officer for the local authority to improve attendance.

Information for parents

- School gates open at **8:30am**
- Children to be in class at **8:40am**
- School gates close at **8:40am**
- School ends at **3:10pm**
- Children to be collected (unless they are a Year 5 or 6 home walker) at **3:10pm**
- School gates close at **3:20pm**
- Children will be taken to After School Club at **3:25pm** and that day's fee may be charged to parents

Lateness and Punctuality

In the morning, registration is called at **8:40am** and again at the start of the afternoon session for all classes. Registers will close at ten minutes after registration times. Any pupil that arrives between **8:40am** and **9:30am** will be marked as 'late' unless the school has previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school. Any child who arrives after **9.30am** will be marked as absent with a **Code U**: which means arrived in school after registration closed.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the St Silas Primary School Pupil and Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator will make contact with parents/carers in the first instance. If the concerns persist, the PFWC/Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will write to the parents/carers letter about punctuality, stating the total minutes lost learning time over a determined period.

If there is still no improvement, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parent/ carer. Should the child's attendance fail to improve, fixed penalty notices may be issued.

Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

Expected Attendance

Your child's attendance is 100 - 96%
No action is required

Your child's attendance is falling below 95%
A Letter is sent to the parents/carers

Telephone call

If attendance does not improve, parents/carers will be contacted by phone by the Pupil and Family Wellbeing Co-ordinator (PFWC) to advise them of this and to see if there are any issues that the school can help them with.

Early help support

If attendance does not improve and falls below 90%, parents/carers attendance lead and PFWC will arrange a formal meeting to discuss barriers to the pupils' regular school attendance and identify any possible solutions e.g. If needed, attendance contracts and early help support plans will be put in place, and regular home visits will be conducted.

Medical evidence will be required for any further absences to be recorded using the 'I' code. This call will be documented and parents will receive an email documenting what interventions have been agreed.

A Formal Parent Contract Meeting with the SLT member with responsibility for attendance.

They will be invited to attend a Formal Parent Contract Meeting with the attendance lead to discuss issues that may be affecting the pupil's attendance and identify how the school can help address this. This meeting will be formally documented and parents/carers will again be reminded that it is their, "legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually."

Following the formal Parent Contract meeting, if your child's attendance fails to improve within the agreed timeframe, the school will refer to the inclusion officer at Blackburn with Darwen to proceed with the fast track attendance pathway or a penalty notice for a non attendance may be issued.

(Working together to improve school attendance - August 2024)

FAST TRACK TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

St Silas CE Primary School and the Blackburn with Darwen Inclusion Team are working together to improve school attendance.

St Silas CE Primary School will now consider using the Fast Track to Improving Attendance Pathway in partnership with the local authority to assist schools and families in managing and promoting good school attendance.

An indication of a student having difficulties is often visible through their school attendance. Our experience tells us that there are a variety of reasons why children are off school. These may include instances of ill health, feelings of being behind with work creating worry, anxiety, lack of motivation due to being out of routine, financial difficulties, parental separation etc.

If we can identify any of these issues at an early stage, it is our aim to ensure that the appropriate support can be put in place for our children, young people and their families.

We know that regular school attendance is vital for children to achieve their full potential both academically and socially.

The Fast Track to Improving Attendance Pathway encourages us to work together to ensure each child's attendance is at an acceptable level and where appropriate enable you to seek support through the school and other services to assist in improving your child's attendance. In essence this is an early intervention strategy aiming to prevent absence becoming entrenched and to enable children to attend school regularly and on time.

The pathway runs for 8 weeks to assist parents in making attendance improvements. Failure to make improvements could lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court and result in a fine of up to £1000.

Where a family is considered for the Fast Track to Improving Attendance Pathway, we will write to you directly to inform you, and at that point you will receive further information regarding the process.

If you are currently experiencing any difficulties with school attendance, please speak to us at the earliest opportunity to try and resolve the issues.

Absence in Term Time

The Headteacher **will not** grant **any** Leave of Absence/Leave during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents **do not** have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the child is absent from school during that period for more than five days.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Inclusion Officer at Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority.

Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority have the right to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with Blackburn with Darwen’s Non School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

It is important to note, Penalty notices issued for the attendance offences will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be at £80 if paid within 21 days.

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

A maximum of 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child in a 3-year period. After that, the council will consider other legal interventions such as prosecution

Why Attendance and Punctuality Actual Matters

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance, this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

5. Statutory Reporting to the Local Authority (LA)

In accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**, the school maintains a legal duty to share attendance data with the Local Authority (LA). This includes mandatory reporting at specific thresholds of unauthorised absence.

15 day sickness absence

Schools have a statutory duty to notify the Local Authority (Blackburn with Darwen Council) in cases of continuous or cumulative absence due to illness (recorded with **Code I** in the register).

The trigger for this notification is reached when the school has **reasonable grounds to believe** a pupil will miss, or has already missed, **15 school days** (consecutive or cumulative) because of their health needs.

This is in line with the statutory guidance [Arranging Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#) (Section 19 duties) on GOV.UK

Children Missing In Education (CMIE)

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the Inclusion Officer at Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes)
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance/children-missing-education>

