Attendance policy

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1. Aims

It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly. We are a caring community, whose Christian values are built on mutual trust and respect for all.

This policy has been created using a template from The Key and in conjunction with school governors.

Trinity St Stephen Church of England First School is committed to providing a broad and balanced education to all pupils and embraces equal opportunities for all.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. As a school we have a zero tolerance of unauthorised absence.

All staff understand that school absence could be a safeguarding matter and quick follow up is essential.

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

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working Together To Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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 Ethos Committee reviews attendance data and whole school attendance is reported at the Full Governing Body meetings.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Delivering any attendance training or updates
- 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, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Senior Attendance Champion is the headteacher, Mrs Louise Lovegrove who can be contacted via the school office, tel: 01753 862540

3.4 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Promoting attendance through a range of different ideas. These may include, regular updates in school newsletters, public information on year group attendance, celebrating improvement in attendance for year groups

3.5 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 by 9am.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow up unexplained absence on the day and record details. If no details have been sent to the school office by 8.45am a telephone call will be made to the main contact by 10am. If there is no response, this will be followed up again before lunchtime. If no response is received by the following morning the Education Welfare Service will be informed.
- Keep the electronic registers updated regularly and provide attendance reports from these
- Ensure that contact information is kept up to date

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time. The registers open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am. Pupils must arrive in their school classroom by 8.55am on each school day.

- Arrival between 8.55am and 9.15am is recorded as a Late and after 9.15am may be recorded as an unauthorised absence for this session depending on the reason.The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm. The second session finishes at 3.15pm.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that school has up to date contact and emergency details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances, including the date and time and any related details

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Evidence may be requested for any unplanned absence.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Notification of a child's medical appointment can be done by either telephoning or emailing the school office.

(Contact number: 01753 862540 Email: office@tssfirst.co.uk) This must be done as soon as is practicable, preferably at least 24 hours in advance.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (**between 8.55am and 9.15am)**
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (**after 9.15am**)

The school maintains a paper signing in and out register to record times and reasons for late arrival and collection. This can be used as evidence to trigger a meeting with parents/carers to discuss any ongoing patterns of lateness.

Parents/carers who routinely drop off their children after 8.55am and/or are regularly collected late, ie after 3.15pm will be asked to attend a meeting with the headteacher to discuss the matter and to try and resolve this problem.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Education Welfare Service to support in making contact or/and the school may also contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be done using termly written reports usually handed out at parents' meetings and sent home with written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term-time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death and/or funeral of a close relative (parent or grandparent), respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. https://tssfirst.co.uk/our-school/policies/attendance-and-behaviour The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The Headteachers decision is final.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.

- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school makes use of the weekly newsletter to celebrate attendance success and to promote good attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors attendance through the scrutiny of attendance data at five points throughout the school year.

1. The end of the first half term (October)
2. The end of the first full term (December)
3. The end of the third half term (February)
4. The end of the Spring Term (March/April)
5. The end of the Summer Term (July)

Individual families who are failing to meet the expected attendance target will be followed up in one of the following ways:

1. Sending a letter to parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns. The letter invites parents into school to discuss the concerns and the barriers parents/carers may be facing

2. Having discussed strategies to support better attendance introducing attendance targets for families to work towards, alongside regular review meetings
3. Taking further advice from the Education Welfare Service

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7.5 National Framework for Penalty Notices and Notices to Improve

Trinity St Stephen Church of England Church School will always want to work with families to improve attendance and support to address barriers to improvement. If measures to support have been unsuccessful or the absence is an unauthorized period of holiday parents may face paying a fine.

Fines will be considered for any absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more for unauthorized reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
K	Attending a place other than the school	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil.
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised Leave of Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised Leave of Absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Authorised Leave of Absence	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of Absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travel	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Y1	Unable to attend the school due to transport normally provided not being available	Local authority arranged transport unavailable
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	Travel disruption caused by local, national or international emergency

Y3	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	An area of the school is shut due to school emergency
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	The whole school is shut due to school emergency
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Pupil in police detention
Y6	Unable to attend due to public health guidance or law	Transmission of infection or disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Something in the nature of an emergency has occurred.
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day