

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

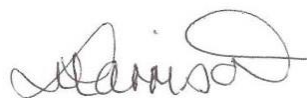


**'Learning for life,
building a firm foundation'**

Reviewed: February 2024

Headteacher: Lisa Harrison

Signed:



Aims of our Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At All Saints, we believe that our vision, *Learning for life, building a firm foundation*, is vitally important in terms of attendance and punctuality. This is because children need firm foundations on which to build in all aspects of their lives. In the case of this policy, this means that by attending school regularly and punctually, children will be able to take full advantage of the educational and social and emotional opportunities available to them. High attainment is directly linked to good attendance.

The whole school community (pupils, parents/carers, teaching staff, support staff and school governors) have the responsibility of ensuring that attendance and punctuality at All Saints are good. Everybody has a role to play in this aim. The purpose of this policy is to set out everyone's roles and responsibilities.

This policy has been produced after consultation with the school's governing body and representatives from the school community. It follows the guidance in the Department of Education's publication *Working together to improve school attendance* (Published February 2024). Please see the final page of this document for links to the relevant legislation that has been used to write this policy.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. **It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education** either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school¹.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

The prime responsibility of ensuring that children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with the parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of the child).

All Saints CE Primary School and Nursery expects that parents/carers will:

- Ensure that their children attend school every day on time
- Call the school (or use the text/App messaging service) to report their child's absence before 8:55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise us when they are expected to return. If school does not receive a reason for absence, school will contact the pupil's parent/carer to ascertain the reason for absence. If school is not provided with a valid reason, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/109967/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

- Provide the school with at least 2, and preferably 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Notify the school about any change in circumstances that they believe may be affecting their ability to ensure that their children attend school. This is to enable the pastoral team to support the parents to access wider support services to support their child's attendance and access their right to education

Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, ready to learn

Attendance and punctuality are given a high profile within school. Good attendance and punctuality are celebrated through assemblies and the school's newsletter. Children with good attendance receive recognition and rewards.

If children are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should share these using any of the various in-school methods for sharing worries or concerns (Worry Wall, Time to Talk, Pastoral email, speak to a trusted adult).

Responsibilities of the School

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 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, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

The pastoral team are responsible for:

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues (including home visits where contact by telephone is unsuccessful)
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and pastoral team
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Contacting parents/carers of absent pupils where parents have not informed school of the reason for absence
- Transferring calls from parents to the pastoral team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Classroom staff (teachers and teaching assistants) are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis
- Providing an environment in which all of our pupils are eager to learn and feel valued
- Setting a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality
- Discussing absence and punctuality with parents/carers so that they can work together to make improvements.

Our Strategy to improve attendance and punctuality

Every week, the attendance coordinator will identify all of the classes that have achieved at least 96% attendance during the previous week. For those classes, **ALL** of the children (including children who were absent) will have 10 mins extra playtime at some time during the week at a time to be decided by the class adults. Classes that have earned extra playtime will be announced in assembly each week. If it is every class, we will be delighted!

Recording Attendance

Attendance register:

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

We will take our attendance register at 8:55am on each school day and at the start of the afternoon session following the lunch break. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] 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

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

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:45am. Pupils who arrive after 8:55am without a valid authorised reason will be marked with the unauthorised absence code, 'U' - 'late after registers close'.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:45pm in KS1 and 1pm in KS2.

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 8:55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 02476 382123 or by using the school's text/App messaging service.

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 in advance.

If a pupil is not attending as required, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see & speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's

emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

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.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. 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. A leave of absence request form must be completed.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- before the register has closed at 9:25am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

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 visit the home address. If the school has any reason to believe that an absent or late pupil may be at risk of harm, they will inform the police and the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- 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 5 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
- Refer to the local authority if a pupil is absent for more than 10 days and school is unable to make contact with the parent/carer (via telephone call, text message, home visit) and the whereabouts of the child is unknown. The child will be considered "Missing in Education". This will not apply if the child has been hospitalised for medical reasons.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Children who go missing during the school day

Once a pupil is identified as missing by any member of school staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed. Staff will use professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the pupils' whereabouts before notifying the Police. Timeliness should be on a case by case basis. Designated Safeguarding Lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability. School staff will try to locate the pupil and try to establish the whereabouts of them. School staff will contact home and try to contact the pupil via their mobile telephone if known.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at half-termly parent/teacher consultations.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking in to 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 the leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. School will only consider an application for leave of absence from the resident parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Valid reasons for **authorised** absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If

necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Approved educational activity

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 £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days (From August 2024 -£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 consider:

- 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.

Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance.

Text messages will be sent at the end of each week to all parents/carers where no reason for absence has been provided.

Text messages will be sent at the end of each week to all parents/carers of pupils who were late arriving to school during that week.

We will send attendance monitoring letters when attendance drops below 96%.

- **Stage 1 Letter** Inform parents/carers that their child's attendance is being monitored and an improvement is expected. Monitor over the next half term
- **Stage 2 Letter** No improvement in attendance – monitor for the next 4 weeks
- **Stage 3 Letter** No improvement – Meet with headteacher to discuss reasons for absence and offer help and support. Attendance target set
- **Stage 4 Letter** No improvement and attendance target not achieved – referral to Warwickshire Attendance Service.

Monitoring and analysing attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data fortnightly by year group and reasons for absence. It will identify pupils whose absence is a cause for concern.
- Attendance data is reported to staff and governors on a termly and annual basis. This includes analysis by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, Looked after Children and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- 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

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.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, pastoral team members 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

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, including the Early Help Pathway to Change process, to remove the barriers to attendance

Policy monitoring arrangements

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

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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.