



St Anne's C of E Primary School



Attendance Policy

April – 2023



Introduction

St Anne's C of E primary school recognises the importance of attendance and punctuality of pupils to ensure that they are able to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them by law. St Anne's recognises the role it plays in ensuring children attend school and are punctual. It also recognises the schools responsibilities in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality for all the pupils within the school.

This policy applies to all of the pupils registered to attend the school and is available to all parents and carers through the schools website or by requesting a copy from the schools office.

This policy has been written to comply with all relevant Children's Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department of Education and the relevant advice and guidance from the local education authority. In line with the 1996 Education Act, the school expects children to attend school every day when it is in session. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's good attendance.

Children who are absent from school regularly often miss out on social interactions with peers, can struggle to maintain friendships and flourish at school and can start to feel more isolated. Persistent absence from school can lead to significant amounts of learning time missed:

- Missing one day a week = 80% attendance = **More than half a term missed a year**
- An average of 80% attendance across a child's time at school adds up to **2 years of learning time missed.**

Ensuring children are in school on time is just as important as ensuring they are in school each day. Children can feel self-conscious if they are always the last child to enter the class. This can affect their self-esteem and confidence. All children take a little time to settle in the morning so it is important that they are in class on time and ready to start the day:

- **5 mins late every day = 3 days missed of learning a year**
- **15 mins late every day = 2 weeks of learning missed a year.**

Whilst the school recognises that the ultimate legal responsibility for ensuring a child's good attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of parents / carers, the school will always endeavour to work closely with children, their families and external agencies to try and overcome any difficulties that there may be.

Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to ensure that parents, carers, staff and governors at St Anne's are fully aware of and are clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

The school expects attendance of pupils to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Through ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality, pupil's achievement and progress will improve.

- Create an ethos where good attendance and punctuality is recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Local Authority Attendance Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued as well as encouraging a sense of pupils taking responsibility for their own actions.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents / carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/ carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's ages and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up on non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have the authority. Consequently not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support from the parent.

Procedures

St Annes will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration process.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/pupils and pupils.
- To have consistence and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time. A penalty notice may be issues in this event.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Local Authority Attendance Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to schools initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the DFE where requested.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teacher:

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking for overall poor attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and / or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents / carers.
- Informing the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Follow up absences with immediate requests for explanations which should be noted within the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings with parents / carers where necessary.

The Head Teacher

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring of individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the county Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- Sending out of standard letters regarding attendance.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the schools LAAO.
- Liaising with other professional to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration Staff:

The Office Administrator based within the school office will be responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring that the reasons for a child's lateness is gathered and recorded from all parents / carers and pupils that arrive at school after the registers close.
- Contacting the parents / carers of absent pupils who have not contacted the school.
- Recording the details of pupils who arrive late or go home before the end of the school day.
- To work alongside the Head Teacher in keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and / or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents / carers.

Parents / Carers:

Parents / carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence the school will require evidence from the doctor / dentist office. (Appointment card /letter, copy of prescription or medication packaging with the child's name on)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Work with the school in supporting their child in attending school regularly and on time each day.

Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The electronic attendance register must be completed by the class teacher or the cover teacher taking the class in their absence / PPA cover.

All attendance records are documented using the schools MIS software. Attendance registrations are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

The chart below outlines the times where each code is to be marked on the register.

Arrive at school Class door open and member of staff receives children	8.50am – 9am
Registration Closes (All registers are taken by this time) Class door is closed and access into school is via the front office Code 'L' is entered for any child arriving at school from this time.	9.00am
Official Absence is recorded Code 'U' is now entered for any child not in school and whose absence has not been authorised or has arrived late, 30 mins after school has officially begun without a legitimate reason.	9.30am

A record is kept of the amount of minutes that a child is late and this is documented on the schools MIS system. On arriving at school it is the responsibility of the parent / carer to inform the school office of the reason why their child is late. If an older child is arriving at school unaccompanied, the child is responsible for informing the school office of the reason they are late into school that morning. If a child has been unable to do this, the school office will contact the child's parent/carer to establish an explanation.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late, miss a significant part of the school day and can often arrive unsettled. It is important for children to be in class and part of the registration process where important messages may be given to the class. The school timetables show that lessons start straight after registers closing and children arriving after this time will miss out on important learning.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents / carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents /carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Parents and carers must be aware that in line with the DFE guidance on School Attendance (2020), children arriving at school after

Absences

Parents /carers should contact the school on the first (and each subsequent) day of their child's absence. When parents / carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised electronically using the schools MIS system. It is important that the school receives accurate information from the parents with reasons for the child absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where the school has not received reasons for a child's absence, an explanation will be sought from the parents/ carer. If an explanation is not forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. (Attendance Code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent and the school has not received any verbal or written communication from the parent / carer, then the school will initiate a 'First Day Contact' process.

The school Office Administrator will check all of the registers from 9.05am until 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. Where there are occasions when the school is unaware of why a child is absent then the school will contact the parent / carer to check the reasons for the absence. This is to ensure that the school knows where the child is and that the child is safe.

Illness

When a child has an illness that means that they will be away from school for a long period of time, the school will do all it can to send material home for the child to complete so that they can keep up with their school work. However, this will be in negotiation with the parent / carer and will depend on how poorly the child is as to what is reasonably expected for them to complete.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period of time, or be repetitive, the school will contact the county support services for advice.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related to the absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or a copy of a prescriptions. The school may seek permission from a parents / carer, so that it can make its own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from school during term time.

With effect of September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers to authorise absence of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional and unavoidable circumstances exist. Parents must complete an application for 'leave of absence – Exceptional circumstances' if their child is to be absent from school for any other reason than illness. Please refer to this form for further information.

Penalty Notice

If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school you may be issued with a Penalty Notice, or made subject of court proceedings under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the County Council's code of conduct.

The amount of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. Should a parent /carer on whom a notice is served fail to pay the fine in full within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where on conviction a sentence of a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed.

Addressing Attendance Concerns/Early Intervention Process

The school expects attendance at school of 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school there is a reliance on parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns about attendance, parents and carers are always informed of these concerns. Initially, concerns can be in the form of informal discussions with parents / carers. However these concerns will also be communicated via letters that are sent home. The school will always provide opportunities for parents / carers to discuss reasons for absence and will try to provide support and advice on how attendance can be improved. Where a child's absence does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service.

The Local Authority Attendance service has the powers to issue penalty notices to parents / carers where there has been a referral to the Local Authority from the school as part of the school's process to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a schools attendance order.

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) carries out regular checks to identify children with low attendance and work with the school to improve.

Monitoring Attendance

The school office administrator has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the school's MIS system. Regular meetings are held with the head teacher and Pastoral Leader to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Absence Letters – informing parents of a child's poor attendance –

Absence letter 1 – will be sent to parents / carers of any child who has recorded an absence rate of less than 91%, since the beginning of autumn term.

Absence letter 2 – will be sent if absence has not improved satisfactorily in the six weeks after letter 1.

Alongside this letter a meeting will be held to discuss the child's poor attendance and a further target will be set and be monitored weekly. If the target is not met satisfactorily, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Absence letter 3 – will be sent out if during the monitoring period there is still poor attendance. The Local Authority Attendance service may become involved. This will be done via a referral letter to the Local Authority.

Late Letter – Lateness will be monitored alongside attendance and where a child is deemed to be missing a significant amount of learning time due to lateness, a late letter will be issues to parents / carers.

Suspected Holiday Letter – If the school has been made aware of an unauthorised absence due to family holiday, then a letter will be sent to the parent / carer to request further clarification and outlining the process of referring the absence to the Local Authority Attendance service.

Appendices:

- Absence letter 1
- Absence letter 2
- Absence letter 3
- Late letter
- Suspected Holiday letter
- Leave of Absence request form – Exceptional Circumstances.

Policy approved: - April 2023

Review – April 2025

Date:

Name & address of parent / carer

Dear Parent / carer

Re: *(Pupil name)*

Dob:

Class:

I am writing to you to advise you that *(pupils name)* school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to *(enter percentage %)* and as a result we are becoming concerned that *(pupils name)* is missing a significant part of their learning. I have enclosed a copy of *(pupil's name)* attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables students to keep up with the work required.

I will continue to monitor *(pupil's name)* attendance over the next 6 weeks and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If possible, and again if it is medical please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on *(pupil's name)* attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me. It may also be useful for you to speak to your child's class teacher as we can all work together to make a difference.

Yours Sincerely

Date:

Name & address of parent / carer

Dear Parent / carer

Re: (*Pupil name*)

Dob:

Class:

I am writing to inform you that (*pupil's name*) attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting (*pupil's name*) progress and we need to meet with you.

You are required to attend a meeting with myself to discuss the matter further at the time and date below:

Date:

Time:

Should (*pupil's name*) attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and / or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and / or 3 months of prison.

Medical evidence is now required for any future absences to be authorised with immediate effect.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support all of our pupils in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve (*pupil's name*) attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely

Date:

Name & address of parent / carer

Dear Parent / carer

Re: *(Pupil name)*

Dob:

Class:

I am writing to you regarding (pupil's name) persistent absence from school. Despite meeting with me on (Insert date of the meeting held at stage 2) (pupil's name) attendance in the last 6 weeks has failed to meet the targets we agreed.

I enclose a copy of your child's attendance record for your reference.

As a parent /carer it is your legal responsibility, as stated under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends school at which he / she is registered, regularly and punctually.

With effect of September 2015, schools have been advised by the governments department of education (DfE) that Persistent Absence (PA) threshold will be reduced to 10%. Previous to this it was 15%.

This means that if a child has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if attendance fails to improve during the next (insert agreed number of weeks) weeks, the school will have no option other than to refer the case to the Cambridgeshire County Council for possible legal intervention.

Yours Sincerely

Date:

Name & address of parent / carer

Dear Parent / carer

Re: (*Pupil name*)

Dob:

Class:

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child is beginning to show a pattern of persistent lateness.

It is the duty of parents/ carers to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctuality. This encouraged habits of good time keeping and lessons any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education I would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

Please note that if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I must remind you that as a parent / carer it is your legal responsibility, as stated under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school as which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice issued against you and / or legal proceedings being considered.

Yours Sincerely

Date:

Name & address of parent / carer

Dear Parent / carer

Re: (*Pupil name*)

Dob:

Class:

I am writing to you about (*pupil's name*) absence from school from <<date>> to <<date>>.

From information received from other sources we believe that this was due to a family holiday. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However if the absence was not due to a family holiday and it was due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, (*Child's name*) absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting unauthorised family holiday.

If unauthorised absences are recorded a Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/ carer in respect of each child who is absent from school.

Whether a Penalty Notice is issued or not, your child's attendance will be monitored and this along with further unauthorised absences may lead to legal action being taken under section 444 of the Education Act of 1996.

Yours sincerely



LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM – (Exceptional Circumstances)

The school expects attendance at school of 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

The law does not grant parents /carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Permission must be sought in advance. Recent government regulations have removed the discretion on head teachers in agreeing term time holiday requests except in exceptional circumstances which are considered on a case to case basis.

You are advised to **NOT** make arrangements until your request has been considered by the school.

If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recoded as an unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may make you liable for a Penalty Notice which will be enforced by the Local Education Authority. Failure to settle a Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution by the Local Authority.

To the Attendance Officer / Pastoral Leader of St Anne’s C of E Primary School,

I wish to have an absence of days authorised due to exceptional circumstances for ;

(Childs Name) Class

Details of why I feel these are exceptional circumstances are: (Please refer to information on the back of this form. You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Please attach any supporting evidence you may wish to show the school)

Do you have other children at another school? (Please share their name and the school they attend)

Name of parent / carer (Print)

Signature of parent / carer

First day of absence Last day of absence

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date form received	No of days requested	Current % attendance	Attendance code	Date entered on to SIMS

Signed by Pastoral Leader / Head teacher Date

Absence from school in term time

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable for his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Receiving a good full-time education will give your child the best possible start in life. Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

As a parent /carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact.

Application must be made in advance, as schools do not have the power to authorise absence retrospectively.

Unavoidable absence from school will be for authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these outside of school hours if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- External examinations
- Visiting another school for a valid reason
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances.

Other examples of absence from school that will **not** be authorised:

- Shopping trip during school hours
- Family day trips
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Holidays which have not been agreed
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- A holiday booked in error
- Employer's failure to grant holidays to parents during school holidays.
- Death of a pet
- To care for family members.

WARNING

If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an unavoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school you may be issued with a Penalty Notice, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the County Council's code of conduct.

The amount of a penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom a notice is served fail to pay the fine in full within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates court where on conviction a sentence or a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed.