

St Mary & St Paul's CE Primary School



Attendance Policy

September 2024

**“Life in all its fullness through Learning and
Love”**

Attendance Policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly and re-presented to The Governing Body as appropriate if significant changes are made.

Policy reviewed:

To be reviewed: Annually

Reviewed by:	P Brooksbank	Date:	Nov 24
Signature:	P Brooksbank	Date:	Nov 24
Chair/Vice of Governors Signature:	N Garvey	Date:	Nov 24

Attendance Lead – P Brooksbank

Family Support Worker – K Strong

St Mary & St Paul’s CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Statement

- 1.1 St Mary & St Paul’s CE Primary School expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Our Vision is “Life in all its fullness through Learning and Love” and therefore attendance is essential. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Once a child is enrolled at school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which absence is authorised by the school.
- 1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was ‘authorised’ or ‘unauthorised’ and provide reasons why the child is absent.
- 1.4 Definition of ‘authorised absence’:

- an absence is classified as authorised when the school has ascertained that a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Medical appointments will be considered as an authorised absence as the child is not present in school. If parents are able to present the child at the school office before the arranged appointment, they will be able to receive their attendance mark for the session. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by the school.
- only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay away from school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- [Updated] DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

- maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
- ensure that pupils are safe and that their whereabouts are known;
- eliminate unauthorised absence;
- ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
- ensure that school staff and parents and carers are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness;
- ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance;
- make clear to parents and carers the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;
- ensure that children enjoy coming to school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and consistently.
- reward children who are good attenders.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Registration Times

Nursery (am) :	8.40am (session finishes at 11.40am)
Reception - Year 6 :	8.45am (gates open at 8.45am)
Nursery (pm) :	12.25pm (session finishes at 3.25pm)
Reception – Year 2 :	1.00pm
Years 3-6 :	Varied starts to the afternoon session

A child will be marked late if they arrive in school after the register has been taken in class – 9.00am. After this time the child will be marked as ‘late’.

If the child arrives in school after a further 45 minutes (9.45am) then this is classed as 'late after the register has closed' and this is considered to be an unauthorised absence.

Punctuality:

Poor punctuality is unacceptable as this impacts on the school day for the child who is late, as well as others. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss vital input from their teacher, as well as missing any important news for the day.

The school gate / classroom doors will be closed at 9:00am.

Children arriving after the gate closes will be **classified as late** and **will need to enter the school via the main entrance** where they will be greeted and marked in.

We will also inform parents /carers in writing if a child is persistently late or appears to have a regular pattern of lateness.



How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45 am**.

Registers are marked immediately and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:45am** the registers will be closed – in accordance with Regulations.

If a child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site, **but this will not count as a present mark** in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means that parents/carers may face the possibility of a **Fixed Penalty Notice**, if the problem persists.

If a child does have a persistent late record, then parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Attendance Lead and/or Mr Brooksbank to resolve the problem.

Parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, thus affecting the learning of others in the same class.

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



3 Procedure if a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

The school encourages parents to telephone the school to inform them of their child's absence through illness, on the first morning of absence. This prevents school office staff having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason. Parents should not use e-mail or text messaging to inform the school of a child's absence.

- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence, and confirm its duration, even if the parent telephoned the school on the first day of absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 3.5 The school learning mentor / family support worker has an open-door policy and is available to talk to parents / carers about any attendance concerns that they may have.
- 3.6 The school will follow Knowsley's attendance procedures (see Appendix A) and will support the family in encouraging the child / children to come back to school.

4 Requests for leave of absence for a child

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special religious event (such exceptional circumstances would not include normal events such as birthdays or regular religious ceremonies). We expect parents and carers to contact the school to obtain authorisation at least a week in advance.

4.2 Term Time Holidays

Parents and carers have no statutory right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their children are not required to be in school. Obviously, there are cases of exceptional circumstances where requests will be authorised but generally a holiday will be an unauthorised leave of absence. As a school we appreciate what benefits a holiday might have educationally but only when school attendance is taken as a priority.

- 4.3 Our school considers pupils' continuous attendance at school to be so essential for their academic achievement that all holidays are now considered to be unauthorised absences. Both the school and the Local Authority take the issue of school attendance very seriously and parents should be aware that where leave of absence is taken during term time without permission they may be issued with Education Penalty Notice fines of £80 (rising to £160) per parent per child by the Local Authority. Parents must notify school of they are intending to remove a child for a family

holiday, following which the headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body, will be notified if required.

- 4.4 Any child who has to leave school early for a specific reason (such as a medical appointment) should be signed in or out as appropriate, in order that the pupils on site can be monitored in case of an emergency.
- 4.5 In an emergency, all registers and the sign in / out book should be taken outside for a pupil count.
- 4.6 Once pupils have entered the school building, they must not leave the premises unless their parents have been notified and given permission.
- 4.7 After registration, registers should be sent to the office. Whereby they are kept readily available in case of an emergency.

Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that, where possible, the child can keep in touch with the learning going on in their class.
- 5.2 Under the 'Statutory Guidance for Attendance: Working together to improve school attendance' it becomes a statutory requirement for schools to inform the Local Authority of all children with 15 days of sickness absence (consecutive or cumulative). As a school, we will require medical evidence for absences for this period of time. A child must be seen by the school every 10 days.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss the reasons. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action, possibly resulting in a fixed penalty fine, against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

6.3 When are Fixed Education Penalty Notices (EPN) used?

An education penalty notice may be issued if:

- 10 sessions (5 days) in any 10 week period of consecutive unauthorised absence including an unauthorised leave of absence (e.g. holiday).
- 10 sessions (5 days) in any 10 week period of non-consecutive unauthorised absences.
- Unauthorised absence due to truancy – including pupils stopped on truancy operations.

- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).
- Being found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion.

What a Fixed Penalty Notice is?

- If your child/children have 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (including holidays during term time) within a 10 week rolling period, you are likely to be issued a Fixed Education Penalty Notice of £80 to each parent of each child (if paid within 21 days).
- If there is a second offence within 3 years, you are likely to be issued with a second Fixed Education Penalty Notice of £160 to each parent of each child (if paid within 21 days).
- If there is a third offence within 3 years, a penalty notice will not be issued and instead legal proceedings may be instigated.
- From August 2024 there will be no warning letter sent for holidays.
- For intermittent days absence (10 sessions - 5 days) a warning letter will be sent on the 5th day of absence.

The thresholds for triggering Persistent Absence are approximately:

Half term 1 - **7** sessions (3.5 days)
 Half term 2 - **14** sessions (7 days)
 Half term 3 - **20** sessions (10 days)
 Half term 4 - **25** sessions (12.5 days)
 Half term 5 - **31** sessions (15.5 days)
 Half term 6 - **38** sessions (19 days)

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 While the school would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children who, through illness or other circumstances, have been unavoidably absent from school, we do, on a half termly basis give attendance incentive rewards or certificates for children with 100 per cent attendance over a term or a whole school year, in order to maintain a focus on the importance of regular attendance.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors as part of our annual target-setting process. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in

previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures in line with national expectation when setting its own targets. Our target is for every child to be in school for 100% of the time.

9 Children who are away from school for a period of days

- 9.1 The school will attempt to make contact with all children who are away from school on a daily basis.
- 9.2 Should the child not be seen after a period of 5 days then a home visit will be arranged by two members of the pastoral team.
- 9.3 Should the school not be able to contact the parents / carers of the child they will complete the following actions:
- try all emergency contact numbers to see if other family member, neighbours or friends have had recent sight of the child and family
 - attempt to speak to neighbours
 - speak to other agencies or settings known to the family in case they have been in contact
 - make a number of visits including at different times of the day to include meal times
 - leave a letter requesting the parents/carers contact school
 - consider whether there is information to believe the child and family have simply moved away and the child is deemed 'CME'
 - discuss any concerns with Children's Services
- 9.4 If the school are still unable to make contact with the family and see the child then a referral to the Police should be made and a request for a welfare check to be completed.

10 Reluctant attenders/school refusal

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve.

11 Children Missing Education

A child cannot be taken off our school roll until they start in the next school. Both the parent and the receiving school must inform us of the start date. Failure to receive confirmation of a forwarding school will result in a child being classed as a Child Missing Education and we have a duty to inform the Local Authority and Police of their missing status. The Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures. This will include: liaising with, School Attendance Service, Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

12. Leavers

If a child is leaving to attend another school or due to relocation, full information about: date of move, new address, the new school and start date is required.

13. Exclusions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

14. Early Pick-ups

Children who are collected early (at the end of the school day) also miss out on teaching time and the opportunity to reflect and review the topics that they have been focusing on during the afternoon. Please refrain from collecting the children early unless there is a specific appointment that they are to attend.

15 Monitoring and review

15.1 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they can be.

15.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

15.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

15.4 Attendance will be monitored by the family support worker, deputy head teacher and headteacher.

14.5 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the governing body or sooner if necessary.

Signed : The Governing Body

Date : Nov 24

Appendix A

St Mary & St Paul's CE Primary **Attendance Strategy (in line with Knowsley Attendance Service Strategy)** **'Every Day Counts'**

Level 1 – Universal (School)

- Step 1 – Phone calls to parents (first day response)
- Step 2 – Stage 1 letter (see appendix 1)
- Step 3 – Initial meeting (this may take place at the gate / needs to be a face to face conversation)
- Step 4 – Home visit (if the child is not attending at all – 2 members of staff)
- Step 5 – Stage 2 letter / Offer of Early Help (see appendix 2)
- Step 6 – If attendance hasn't improved over the period of 6 weeks, then refer to SAS

Level 2 – School Attendance Service (SLA states that we have 2 hours per week)

- Step 1 – If a caseload family (all siblings will be included – referring school's allocation). SAS to set up an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with action plan for family to follow. If this improves over 3 weeks they can come off the list and another family referred. If not, continue to support for 3 weeks.

Level 3 – Family First

- Step 1 – If attendance hasn't improved over 6 weeks at Level 2 the family are to be referred to Family First for additional support

Level 4 – Social Care (Educational Neglect)

Educational Penalty Notice (EPN)

- Sitting alongside this system is the EPN – the LA have recognised that fining parents doesn't seem to have a great deal of impact. Further reviews to follow.
- 6 sessions unauthorised – initial letter
- 10 sessions unauthorised – Notice to Improve

Letters

- There are also other letters to be send to families if attendance improves