

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



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'Following in God's way, Learning day by day, Working with one another, Caring for each other'

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: 2024

1 Rationale

1.1 The Governors and staff at our school expect all children on roll to attend everyday, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

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 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 reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We will work with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil attends school regularly and punctually by:

- Reminding parents regularly of their responsibility in ensuring that their child attends school everyday and punctually
- Working towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children
- Regularly making parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on academic progress. Attendance of less than 95% (i.e. 9.5 days lost from a 190 school day academic year) is known to compromise pupil attainment.

1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. See appendix 1 for the absence codes used.

2. School Procedures

2.1 In accordance with Wigan Local Authority (LA), a letter outlining the triggers and procedure for the issuing of non-attendance penalty notices is sent to all parents and carers at the start of the academic year (see appendix 3). Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

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 or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported 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 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.
For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping or on holiday during school hours, this will be an unauthorised absence.

3. Lateness

3.1 Children are expected by the school to be ready for the start of the day at 8.45 am. Morning registration will take place at 8.50 am and the register will remain open for 30 minutes. Any child not in school by 9.00am will be recorded as late. Any pupil arriving after 9.20am will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is presented.

3.2 In cases where the absence is for attending an early medical appointment the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (copies of appointment letters will be required to verify absence).

3.3 Afternoon registration will be at 1.00pm and registers close at 1.15pm

3.4 Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes as present but will be entered as late before the register closed.

4 If a child is absent

4.1 Parents or carers must contact the school before 9.00am to explain why their child is absent. Where a child has not arrived in school at the close of the register, and parents have not contacted school as to the reason for this absence, then school will telephone/text the parent/ carer to ascertain the reason for non-attendance as soon as practically possible.

4.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence.

4.3 A telephone call or note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

4.4 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.

4.5 If after the child returns to school and no explanation of absence is given by the parent/carers, the school will contact the parents in writing. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 2 weeks if no valid explanation can be given.

5 Requests for leave of absence including holidays

5.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. We discourage parents and carers from arranging any holiday or absence during term time as they are not in the best interests of the child.

5.2 In accordance with DFE regulations school is unable to grant leave of absence for pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. School must be satisfied that circumstances warrant the leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

6 Long-term absence

6.1 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 material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

6.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA) support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

7 Repeated unauthorised absences

7.1 If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will make a referral to the Startwell Service, who will provide support in addressing the issue. The Startwell Service will ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

7.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

8 Extended Leave

8.1 In exceptional circumstances where a parent / carer requests leave totalling more than 10 days per school year each case must be carefully assessed on its merits. Whilst the presumption is to discourage any leave in term time, there are circumstances in which a Headteacher might consider such applications sympathetically including:

- Return to a country of origin for family, religious ,or cultural reasons
- Parent/carer recuperation or convalescence from serious illness or surgery
- Death of a parent or sibling
- Life threatening or critical illness of a parent or sibling

9. Persistent absence

A child who is persistently absent (defined in legislation as 10% or more absences) is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment. In such instances an Early Help may be set up and support will be sought from Wigan LA Startwell Services, however continued unauthorised absence may result in legal action being taken by the LA Attendance Service Team.

10 Managing failure to return by an agreed date

10.1 Failure to return to school by the agreed date, without acceptable cause, will jeopardize the pupils' place at the school.

10.2 Where a pupil has been granted 10 days or more leave and fails to return by the agreed date a further period of 10 days is allowed for the school and Local Authority to investigate the circumstances before de-registration is considered. This 10 day period of investigation is recorded as unauthorised absence.

10.3 If a pupil is unavoidably detained from returning to school by the agreed date the parents/carer must endeavour to contact school and request an additional period of leave. Such cases will be considered on an individual basis.

11. Pupils taking holiday/extended leave without permission

11.1 Where a parent/carer takes a pupil out of school in term time without asking for or not receiving permission, a period of unauthorised absence is immediately created.

11.2 The Headteacher will write to the family advising them that the absence is unauthorised and that there is a risk of the child losing his/her place at the school.

11.3 The school may also notify the LA Startwell Services and may consider a Penalty Notice being issued under the provisions of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003.

11.4 A Penalty Notice may be issued if a child's attendance falls within one or more of the following categories within a 12 week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistent late arrival for school after the close of registration
- If a child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- If Parents or Carers fail to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

11.5 Failure to return to school within 20 school days places the pupil at risk of losing his/her place at the school.

12 Local Authority Attendance Enforcement Service

12.2 In the first instance, if attendance falls below 90%, a letter will be sent home to arrange a meeting with the headteacher. If there is no progress after the meeting then letters will be sent home by the headteacher requesting an improvement and offering support, see appendix 4 to 6 (pages 9 to 11). If the attendance rate does not improve the headteacher will refer to the Local Authority Attendance Enforcement Service who will contact the parents/carers via a home visit or invite parents/carers to a formal meeting. The school may request an educational penalty notice is issued by Wigan LA. A referral may also be made to Startwell Services or an Early Help formulated with the aim being to support families in improving attendance.

12.3 Unauthorised absence which falls below 90% may generate a referral to Startwell Services and school may request an educational penalty notice is issued by Wigan LA.

13 Rewards for good attendance

13.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the awards ceremony at the end of the year. Where pupils have 3 or more lates (excluding legitimate substantiated reasons) in any one year they will not be given a certificate.

14 Attendance targets

14.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors during the Autumn Term within the School Improvement Plan. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

The current attendance target is 97.18%

15 Monitoring and review

15.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly 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 should be.

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

15.3 The rates of attendance will be reported on the school website, and in the termly headteacher's report to the governing body.

15.4 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, (or a member of staff acting on their behalf) who will contact the parents or carer.

15.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.

Equal Opportunities

The governing body will pay particular attention to matters of equality and diversity; it will seek to ensure that the school abides by the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2006, and that no child is treated unfairly because of race or ethnic background, gender or disability.

Appendix 1

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (Not dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (attending other establishments)	Present	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness(not med/dental etc.appoints)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Present	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late(after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

Please report your child's absence from school as soon as possible.

Contacts: 01942 201140

enquiries@admin.saintlukes.wigan.sch.uk

- School has a clear Attendance Policy and will make the decision whether or not to authorise absences. In certain cases medical evidence will be requested. Wherever possible please avoid medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- If a message is not received on day one of absence, you will be contacted by the school office.
- If on Day 3 contact has still not been received a welfare check will be undertaken by the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- The children's attendance is monitored regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and the school. If your child's attendance becomes a cause for concern, parents/carers will be invited into an attendance meeting in school with the headteacher.
- Should the problem persist, a letter will be posted to the child's home address. Parents/carers will be invited into another attendance meeting in school with the headteacher. Alternatively, a home visit may be undertaken by the Local Authority Attendance Service or the Startwell Services.
- Unauthorised absences of more than ten sessions will be referred to the Local Authority/Startwell Services and monitored with a view to fixed penalties being issued.

Please ensure you notify school of any changes to emergency contact numbers.

We appreciate your support in ensuring that your children make the best progress in school and that they are safe and happy.

Appendix 3

Local Authority Template Letter to All Parents

Dear Parent or Carer,

Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period you could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties please contact your school and ask for support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Hardaker
Headteacher

Approved by the Governing Body at their meeting held on

.....

Signed:.....

Date.....

Position: Chair of Governors

Appendix 4

Attendance Warning Letter One

Date

Dear

Attendance Concern

Re:

As you are aware, making sure your child gets to school on time every day is extremely important to help with their daily routine and overall learning. We are aware that on occasions there will be absences, but as a school we want to work with you in order to support your child's attendance.

We are concerned that your child's attendance has fallen **below 90%**. I would like to discuss your child's attendance issues with you in more detail.

Please contact me to arrange an appointment at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S. Hardaker
Headteacher

Appendix 5

Attendance Warning Letter Two

Date

Dear (Insert Name),

Attendance at Risk

Re: -

I am writing following my previous letter dated --/--/---- with regard to your child's attendance.

Attendance is very important and is monitored on a daily basis.

As discussed at our previous meeting, we are concerned that your child's level of attendance has fallen **below 90%**.

As we have seen no improvement, I will be contacting you to arrange an appointment within the next five days to discuss how we can continue to work with you in order to support your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S. Hardaker
Headteacher

Appendix 6

Attendance Warning Letter Three

Date

Dear

During a recent analysis of our attendance records, it has been noted that _____ attendance has remained below 90%. (Actual attendance).

As you can understand this disrupts the education of your child. A record of _____ attendance will now be referred to the Startwell Team and a request for a penalty notice to be issued will be made to Wigan Local Authority Attendance Enforcement Service. If this problem does not improve we will arrange a meeting in school to discuss our concerns further.

It is your parental responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly, you are experiencing any problems with your child's attendance please contact school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S. Hardaker
Headteacher

