



St Alban's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy Title: Attendance
Date of approval: 24.10.24
Approved by: LGC
Date of next review: September 2025

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:

Academic year	Headteacher	Assistant Head	Attendance Officer	Chair of Governors
2023-24	M Smith	Maria Duncan Claire Allan	S Jenkins/ L Nealings	D Curran
2024-25	L Nealings and M Duncan Head of School	Claire Allan	S Jenkins	D Curran

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Roles and Responsibilities	3
3. Recording attendance	5
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	8
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	9
1. Attendance monitoring	10
6.1 Monitoring of attendance	10
6.2 Analysing attendance	10
6.3 Using data to improve attendance	10
6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence	11
6.5 Penalty Notices	11
7. Monitoring arrangements	11
8. Support	11
9. Links with other policies	122
10. Legislation and guidance	12
Appendix 1: attendance codes	12
Appendix 2: pupil absence request form	16

1. Aims

At St Alban's we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

This policy applies to all children registered at St Alban's Primary, and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from School Office.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Board or Trustees

The local 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

2.2 The headteacher / Head of School

The headteacher/principal 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

2.3 The designated attendance officer responsible for attendance

The designated attendance officer is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence
- Make referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Provide reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Local Authority Attendance Officer.
- Liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

The designated attendance officer is **Susan Jenkins**.

2.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by **8:50am and 1.20pm**
- Maintaining an overview of the attendance of the children in their class
- Inform the nominated person (Susan Jenkins or SLT) where there are concerns and acting upon them either in person or via CPOMS
- Provide background information to support referrals
- Monitor follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Provide appropriate 'catch up' in learning for children who have been absent, in consultation with the Attendance Officer
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality to their class
- Discuss attendance at consultation evenings where necessary
- Input information relating to attendance and/or punctuality to CPOMS when appropriate

2.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Collate and record registration and attendance information
- Take and record messages from parents regarding absence with specific detail as to reasons given
- Record details of children who arrive late or go home early on the electronic system with specific times and reasons given
- Contact parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made within one hour of the beginning of the school day
- Contact parents/carers of identified vulnerable children hourly throughout the day on days when the child is absent until contact is made. If no contact is made, follow safeguarding procedures as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy
- Maintain an overview of individual attendance looking particularly for unusual explanations for attendance or lateness offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher
- Follow procedures outlined in this policy in relation to attendance and punctuality

2.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Make sure their child attends school on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before **9.15am** on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Contact 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

2.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time unless otherwise prevented by illness or medical appointment

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

Registers are legal documents and must be marked twice a day. All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

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

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

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9.15am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

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

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We will request medical evidence 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.

With effect from September 2013 the Government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents/Carers are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter. Should parents wish to request a period of absence for their child, a pupil absence request form should be completed (appendix 2).

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Once the doors are closed at **08:45am** school can only be entered via the school office. Any child who comes into school this way after this time will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L) with the time of arrival and the reason given for the lateness. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am when registers close will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, five within a half-term, 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.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence contact will be made by the attendance leader by requesting these details from parents/carers by 10.30am. The Headteacher or Head of School is informed of this. If this text is not responded to by 12.00 noon then the Headteacher and /or Attendance Officer will be informed and the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code N). Safeguarding procedures are then followed to identify the whereabouts of the child/children.
- 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

To support families and children and in line with safeguarding arrangements, some children have been identified as vulnerable for a number of individual reasons e.g. parental illness, and a record of these children is held in the office. In the case of one of these children identified as vulnerable, a phone call, rather than a text message, will be made and this will be followed up hourly until contact is made. If no contact has been made by 11.00am then the Headteacher or other Designated person will be informed and Safeguarding procedures will be followed.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parent meetings throughout the academic year.

School will also issue staged letters for pupils if they are persistently absent or are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time 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.

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/principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Authorised reasons include:

- Child's illness
- Family bereavement.
- Full day medical appointment/assessment
- Religious observance.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all** absences supported by parents/carers 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.

Unauthorised reasons include:

- If no reason is provided
- Absence due to family holiday taken during term time
- Arriving at school after the morning register has closed
- Waiting for a delivery
- Family day out/Shopping trip/Hair cut
- Tiredness after a late night
- Child's birthday

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e. 15 school days or more) a parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address.

4.3 Legal sanctions

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

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

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

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Throughout the school year we will positively promote good attendance in the following ways:

Headteacher newsletter

- Attendance newsletter
- Posters displayed around schools
- Positive praise and encouragement
- Assemblies

1. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring of attendance

A variety of methods are used to monitor and evaluate attendance and punctuality across school:

- Weekly monitoring of whole school attendance by attendance lead in school
- Analysis of attendance and punctuality data on individuals, groups, class and whole school with a focus on identifying trends and patterns before issues arise, including monitoring the attendance of classes, groups and individuals who have had attendance issues in previous years to the current academic year
- Regular meetings between the Attendance Officer and the local authority, Attendance Officer and Headteacher, focusing on identifying any actions required
- Regular updates to Governors and monitoring by Governors with a focus on progress towards the school's attendance targets
- Regular discussions with class teachers, support staff and office staff in relation to individual cases or concerns.

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.

6.2 Analysing attendance

We will:

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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

We will:

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

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

We 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
- Send attendance letters home informing parents/carers of their child's attendance
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

6.5 Penalty Notices

The Local Authority may issue fixed penalty notices (fine) and prosecution to parents for poor attendance. If you don't pay a fixed penalty notice, the Local Authority will make a referral to Court. Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised term-time holidays, poor attendance and poor punctuality (U mark). If your child's attendance does not improve after we have offered support, the consequences may be one of the following:

1. £80 fine (per pupil, per parent/carer) if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.
2. The Local Authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
3. In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of your child.

7. Monitoring arrangements

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

8. Support

We will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School based and external services) to intervene early with support
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. 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

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code

Definition

Scenario

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Pupil absence request form



PUPIL HOLIDAY ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

This is a request for a leave of absence to be granted by school for my child/children to go on holiday in term time.

Holiday destination Dates of holiday: From until

Number of school days which will be missed (do not include weekends or school holidays)

Reason for taking holidays in term time

Have you taken any other holidays in term time during this school year? YES/NO If YES, how many school days were missed?

Parent's address Telephone number

Name(s) of parent or guardian..... Signed Date

(please print) Signed Date

To be completed by parent		To be completed by the school that the child attends			
Please list the names and schools of all children who require permission for this holiday.		Permission granted? Authorised by:			
Name of child (please print)	School	Class or Year Group	Yes/No	Name (please print)	Signed and Dated

This form may be photocopied – permission must be obtained individually for each child from his/her school. Please ensure that each school receives the form in advance of the holiday dates.

Parents - please note that holidays taken in term time without prior permission from school may result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken against you.