



Stanley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

School Attendance Policy

As a church school we believe that every person, every child, and every adult is unique and special with God given gifts and talents which it our job to nurture and cherish.

Statement of intent

Stanley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School has excellent attendance records, with pupils positively enjoying their time spent in school. We believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. This is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
*"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

School Attendance Targets

Our attendance targets are:

Attendance: 98%

Authorised Absence: 2%

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that maintaining our high level of school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

We will ensure that **School:**

- Actively promotes the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents and investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism.
- Forms positive relationships with pupils and parents in order to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensures that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Contacts parents on the first day of any absence if no reason for the absence has been received.
- Sets an attendance target for the year. This target will be monitored monthly, and 100% attendance rewards will be given. Annual reports will be produced for Governors.
- Returns school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Reports the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis.
- Has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Collects and analyses attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Understands the data and uses it to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The **Governing Body** will:

- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensures that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Ensure that the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.

- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) 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.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The **headteacher** will be:

- Responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.
- Ensuring parents are aware of the policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring the Attendance 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.

We request that parents:

- Take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- Ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists, etc. outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

We request that pupils:

- Take responsibility for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- Make sure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

An **“authorised absence”** as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- A leave of absence agreed in advance due to exceptional circumstances.

An **“unauthorised absence”** as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

“Persistent absenteeism” as:

Missing **10 percent** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

Registration & Absence Procedures

The school gates will open at 8:45am and the school day begins with registration at 8:55am. The afternoon register is taken at 1pm. The designated staff member will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence and before the close of registers at 9.10am.

A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

If a parent/carer cannot be contacted, a message will be sent to the parents/carer asking them to contact the school as soon as possible. All contact numbers made available to the school will be called in an attempt to find out why the child is not in school. If we have not managed to make

contact with a parent/carer by 10.15am then we will carry out a home visit and if unsuccessful will call on a neighbour. If we are still unsure of where a child is we will then contact social care and the Police.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Where pupils are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness - In most cases a telephone call from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

Other Authorised Circumstances - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

Exclusions - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

In the case of persistent absence, the headteacher will arrange to meet with parents.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will follow the local authority procedures for Children Missing Education (CME).

Contact information

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details of at least two contacts.
- Providing the school with at least 2 emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

Attendance officer

If pupils are persistently absent, they will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

Late Arrival

The morning register closes at 9:10am. If a child has not arrived by the close of register and we have not been informed of any absence, they will receive a late mark. Pupils arriving after the close of register, must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Term Time Absence

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Exceptional Circumstances

There is a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in 'exceptional circumstances'. The DfE do not define 'exceptional circumstances' and the governing body have agreed that each request should be individually considered by the Headteacher in order to decide whether it would be classified as an authorised absence under exceptional circumstances. If the Headteacher is unable to reach a decision, the request will be considered by the school's governing body. If the governing body are not due to meet prior to the first day of the requested absence, then the Chair of Governors can make this decision using delegated powers.

Exceptional circumstances can only be authorised for the period in which the exceptional circumstance occurs and will not be extended beyond the minimum time required to attend. Any other time, before or after the event, will not be authorised. This includes requests involving long distance travel.

It should be recognised that when making a decision on whether or not to authorise an absence, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with educational needs and/or disabilities and the school will ensure that our Attendance Policy (which this statement forms part of) is implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

If you feel your request would be classed as an exceptional circumstance, but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils)
- Year six transition days (for pupils in year six only)
- SATs week (for pupils in year two and year six)

- Screening weeks (for year one pupils)
- At any other time specified by the school which is identified to parents prior to application.

The Headteacher will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education or if they have concerns that attendance is already a concern.

The Headteacher will not retrospectively authorise absence from school.

The Headteacher cannot, and will not, authorise school absence solely for the purpose of a family holiday. A family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. There may be many reasons for which a family may wish to plan a holiday in term time, including restrictions at work or financial opportunities, however, these do not override the constraints placed on Headteachers not to authorise family holidays.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from school first. Family requests for holidays to see relatives are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances, the availability of cheap flights or holidays are also not deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete under such circumstances

How to make a request for term time absence.

Any requests should be made on our school's leave of absence request form, regardless of whether or not you feel there are exceptional circumstances. These forms can be obtained from the school office and they should be completed and returned to the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. In addition to completing this form, you may also be required speak to the Headteacher and you may be requested to provide evidence to support your application.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

What happens if I either take absence without requesting it, or if I do not abide by the judgment of the school?

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records which will be submitted to the Local Authority. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

If your request is declined, and you still take your child out of school, each parent within your household will be issued with a penalty notice for each child you have taken out of school. At the time of writing this policy the fixed penalty is £60 per parent per child per holiday. This figure doubles if the penalty is not paid within 21 days. **Penalty notices will be issued by the local authority and no payments are made to the school.**

Truancy

Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.

If truancy is suspected, the headteacher will be notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Missing children

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher and are collected by a parent/carer.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the school's Behaviour, Discipline & Exclusion Policy.
- Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with the relevant section of this policy.
- A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

Religious observances

- The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

Appointments

- As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out at the school office by a parent/carer and should be signed back in again on their return.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.

The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.

The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
- The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.
- The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
 - For not less than six hours a week; and
 - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
 - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
 - For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.

Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.

The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.

Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.

The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.

The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.

Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.

A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.

The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:

- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
- Where performances or activities are taking place; or
- Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.

The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.

If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.

The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

Young carers

- The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Using Attendance Data

Pupil attendance will be monitored half termly and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

School will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs or those with physical or mental health needs.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Reduce timetable for a limited period
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Should parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Monitoring

The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

Details of our absence levels can be found on the door to the Quiet Room and also on the website.

Policy Review

This policy was approved for use on **25 September 2023** by the governing body.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with our schools' policy delegation schedule.

We will review this policy earlier than the scheduled review date should there be any change in guidance or legislation related to this policy or should we feel that an earlier review is necessary.

