



# The Schools of the Federation of St Helen's and St Mary's Attendance Policy

St Mary's Senior Attendance Officer: Mrs Bethan Scriven

St Helen's Senior Attendance Officer: Mr Kelvin Chappell

Frequency: Annual	Renewal Date: September 2024
Committee: FGB	

**The policy has been updated to conform with:**

**'Working together to improve school attendance'**

**Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**

**Published: 29 February 2024**

**Applies from: 19 August 2024**

**The expectations of schools have been updated to:**

- Update the section on pupils who are prevented from attending school due to physical or mental ill health to be clear where schools' role starts and ends, provide further clarification around medical evidence, additional support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and part-time timetables.
- Explain the new requirements for schools on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Provide clarification of the expectations of schools' senior attendance champions.
- Expect schools to inform a pupil's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences.

**Parents and carers must contact the school office**, in the first instance, to report an absence:

**St Helen’s School**

School Office: 01454 866530 [sthelensprimary@gmail.org.uk](mailto:sthelensprimary@gmail.org.uk)

**St Mary’s School**

School Office: 01454 867155 [office@stmarysyate.org.uk](mailto:office@stmarysyate.org.uk)

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

<b>Policies, Procedures or Practices</b>	Attendance	Date September 2024	September 2024
EIA CARRIED OUT BY:	J Simpson	EIA APPROVED BY:	J Simpson

Groups that may be affected:

Are there any concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly: issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		X
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication).	X – Considered within the policy	
Gender Reassignment (transsexual)		X
Marriage and civil partnership		X
Pregnancy and maternity		X
Racial Groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		X
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)	X	
Gender (male, female)		X
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		X

Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment.

### Rationale

Regular attendance at school enables each pupil to fulfil her/his potential at all levels. Research links attendance with achievement, indicating that even occasional absence can have a negative effect. We believe that the most important factor in promoting daily attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. In promoting good attendance, it is also hoped that this will lead to the development of habits of good attendance and punctuality for the future. We 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.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

## **Aims**

To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.

To accurately complete admission and attendance registers.

To have robust daily processes to follow up absence.

To regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.

To have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

## **Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent**

To proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.

To work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.

If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

## **Persistently absent pupils**

Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.

Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.

Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.

To work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

### **Severely absent pupils**

To agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

### **Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance**

To maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.

To ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

To consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

To regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

### **Support for pupils with a social worker**

To understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.

To provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

To work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

### **Looked after and previously looked after children**

To have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.

To work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.

To work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.

## **Monitoring**

The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school-based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures. Once a term a meeting is held to analyse attendance and act where concerns arise. Attendance is reported to the Governors six times a year at the Pupils sub-committee meeting.

The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.

Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.

## **Threshold for parent contract**

**Unauthorised absences will be monitored on a rolling 3-year basis (including between schools and different local authority areas).**

**Penalty Notices** can be issued when there have been 10 unauthorised absences (1 school day = 2 sessions, 5 school days = 10 sessions). The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence within 10 school weeks. Penalty Notices are issued for any term-time or irregular absences that are unauthorised (for example, a 5-day term-time holiday) - whether these absences are taken consecutively or cumulatively over a period of 10 school weeks.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Penalty notice**

The first Penalty Notice is issued for term time absences or irregular absences, the amount will be:

- **£80** per parent, per child (if paid within 21 days of issue)
- **£160** per parent, per child (if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of issue)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Penalty notice

The second Penalty Notice is issued for term time absences or irregular absences, issued to the **same parent** for the **same child**, the amount will be:

- **£160** per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days). This is a flat rate. **There is no discount for early payment.**

## Further offences

The third time an offence is committed for unauthorised term time or irregular absences **within 3 years** by the same parent for the same child (including those from other schools or Local Authorities) may result in an automatic request for Prosecution.

**Education Act: 1996: 'It is your responsibility as the parent/carer to ensure your child's school attendance is on a regular basis and if you fail to do this without good cause, you are liable to prosecution. If found guilty of this offence you could be liable to, amongst other things, a fine of up to £2500 and/or a custodial sentence of up to 3 months'.**

Table 1:

Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year to date attendance <math>\leq 95\%</math></li> <li>• And/or 3 or more broken weeks within 1 term</li> </ul>	Text message alerting parent of concern
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year to date attendance <math>\leq 93\%</math></li> <li>• And/or No improvement in attendance from Stage 1</li> </ul>	Letter 1 More challenging letter, offering support but pointing out need for change.
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated absence <math>\leq 90</math></li> <li>• And/or No improvement in attendance following Stage 2</li> </ul>	Meeting a member of the leadership team to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss impact of missed learning</li> <li>• Investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• Set attendance targets</li> </ul>
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous year attendance <math>\leq 95</math></li> <li>• And/or year to date attendance <math>\leq 90</math></li> <li>• And/or no improvement in attendance following stage 3</li> </ul>	Meeting with Headteacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss impact of missed learning</li> <li>• Investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• Set attendance targets</li> <li>• Individual Health Care Plan created and discussed.</li> </ul>
Stage 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous year attendance <math>\leq 95</math></li> <li>• And/or no improvement in attendance following Stage 4</li> </ul>	Visit from the Educational Welfare Officer

## Attendance registration

#### Code / Present at the school (morning session)

#### Code \ Present at the school (afternoon session)

- Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration.
- If the pupil were to leave school premises after registration, the register should not be amended.
- Where a pupil is (in exceptional circumstances) on a reduced timetable and is not expected to be in school at the time that the register is taken, due to the reduced timetable, they must not be recorded as present in the register - instead Code C2 must be used.

#### Code L Late arrival before the register is closed

- The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrived before the register is closed.
- The school will actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival.
- The register will be open **until 9.15 am**, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This will be the same for every session.

#### Code V Attending an educational visit or trip

- The pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place, other than the school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
- If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

#### Code P Participating in a sporting activity

- The pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The decision on approving a sporting activity rests with the school. If they have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body.
- The school has responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity and will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil.
- The school will ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the provider of the sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil.

#### Code B Attending any other approved educational activity

#### Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

- The pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place for any other approved educational activity.
- The school will record the nature of the provision e.g. attending unregistered alternative provision, attending a college course, attending transition days at a school where they are to become a registered pupil.
- The schools has responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity and will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil.
- The school will ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil.

The B code **must not be used** where a pupil is, exceptionally, completing remote learning at home.

#### **Code D** Dual registered at another school

- To avoid double counting, this code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
- Where a pupil is registered at more than one school, this code is used to indicate that the pupil is expected to attend the other school at which they are registered.
- The school which the pupil is expected to attend must record the pupil's attendance/absence using the relevant code.
- The main examples are where a pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit or where a pupil is expected to attend another school as an off-site direction to improve behaviour.
- The school will ensure that arrangements are in place whereby all unexpected or unexplained absences are followed up.

#### **Code C1** Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated child employment (performance) abroad

- Where the LA has granted a child performance licence for the pupil to take part in a regulated performance (Section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963).
- Where a pupil is covered by a Body of Person Approval (BOPA).
- Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad to perform (Section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933).

#### **Code C2** Compulsory school age pupil subject to a reduced timetable

- Used in very exceptional circumstances where the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school.
- This code should not be used to denote an agreed flexi-schooling arrangement (in that situation, Code C would apply).

#### **Code C** Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

- All schools can grant leave of absence at their discretion.
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- Where an absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
- Generally, a need or a desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute exceptional circumstances.

#### **Code M** Attending a medical or dental appointment

#### **Code T** Parent travelling for occupational purposes

- The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them.

#### **Code R** Religious observance

- The pupil is absent on a day that is set exclusively apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent belongs to.



- If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body.

#### **Code I** Illness

- The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).
- Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences.

#### **Code E** Excluded

#### **Code X** Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

- This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
- Where a pupil is absent for a session that they were expected to attend school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code, not Code X.

#### **Code Q** Lack of access arrangements

- Where the local authority has a legal duty to provide the pupil with transport to school and it has not yet been arranged.

#### **Code Y1** Transport normally provided not available

- The pupil is unable to attend because the school is eligible for assistance with transport to school, and the transport to and from school that is normally provided is not available.

#### **Code Y2** Widespread disruption to travel

- The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by local, national or international emergencies.

#### **Code Y3** Part of the school premises closed

- Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.

#### **Code Y4** Whole school site closed

- Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly, the attendance register is not taken because there is no school in session.
- Every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the whole school is closed unexpectedly.

#### **Code Y5** Pupils in criminal justice detention

- The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are in police detention, remanded or in youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing or detained under a sentence of detention.

#### **Code Y6** Acting in accordance with public health guidance or law

- The pupil is prevented from attending because their attendance at school would be contrary to guidance or legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.

#### **Code Y7** Any other unavoidable cause

- Any unavoidable cause that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes.
- Will be very seldom used - only in an extreme emergency situation where the pupil is prevented from attending the session e.g. a pupil who is in immigration detention.
- The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent.

#### **Code G** Holiday not granted by the school

- The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
- A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted.

#### **Code N** Reason for absence not yet established

- When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with Code N.
- Where Code N is used, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained.
- If a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.

#### **Code O** Absent in other unknown circumstances

- Where no reason for absence is established or school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.

#### **Code U** Arrived in school after registration closed

- Where a pupil has arrived in school late after the register has closed but before the end of the session.

#### **Code Z** Prospective pupil not on admission register

- To enable schools to set up registers in advance of a pupil joining the school, to ease administrative burden.

#### **Code #** Planned whole school closure

- Whole school closures that are known in advance e.g. half terms, bank holidays, weekends.

## **Punctuality**

Our policy is that we will allow a pupil who is late, arriving by up to 15 minutes from the start of registration, to be marked as "Late" in the attendance register. We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the pupil and may cause classroom disruption. Pupils who arrive persistently late may be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the school leadership team (Stage 3).

Pupils arriving after 15 minutes from the start of attendance registration will be marked as (U) in the register and is unauthorised. A pattern of unauthorised absence U code may lead to formal action for non-school attendance and a possible Penalty Notice fine.

## **Health and Attendance**

Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence, with supporting information, we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with the South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy. <http://www.southglos.gov.uk//documents/Medical-Needs-Policy-December-2016.pdf>.

Supporting information may be in the form of: repeat reference to medical aspects by young person, parent carer, prescription information, medical appointment cards, information from other health professionals

Where there are occasional absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea there is no requirement for medical supporting information. For repeat absences, we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.

## **Absences which are not agreed by the school (Unauthorised)**

The 1996 Education Act requires parents and carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified, and where there are unauthorised absences, we will seek to engage with parent/carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance do not lead to a reduction in unauthorised absence, consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

### **Engaging with parents and carers.**

We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our pupils that we will review our attendance performance each term. We will regularly look at the pupils where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of Broken Weeks, we will contact parents and may arrange to meet and review progress (please see table 1)

## **SAEGUARDING**

### **First Day of Absence Call**

We will regularly request updates of parent-carer contact information. Adults who have day to day care of a pupil are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will contact parents/carers on the first day of unexplained absence. Where absences are of concern and all attempts to engage have failed, we will refer to the Access and Response Team for further investigation.

### **Removal from Roll**

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll, they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare, we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.

If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school, they will update SIMs. Whenever a pupil leaves a school, a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has “disappeared” the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

## **Part-time time-tables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil’s needs; this decision is made by the Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited, must not be treated as a long-term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time-limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C2).

## **Review**

The attendance policy will be reviewed in September 2025

## **South Gloucestershire Attendance Team Contacts**

**Mike Wheeler** – Strategic Lead for Statutory Education <mailto:mike.wheeler@southglos.gov.uk>

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