



St Andrew's CE Primary School Much Hadham



ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At St Andrew's School the staff and Governors believe that all children should receive an education that enables them to receive their full entitlement to continuous, planned learning wherever possible. We wish to promote a positive attitude about school attendance among parents and pupils where all parties understand the need for this continuity.

The staff and Governors at St Andrew's believe that time missed from school cannot easily be made up and disrupts the learning cycle. This is frustrating and upsetting for children and can affect their confidence and self-esteem. At any point in the school year skills and concepts will have been introduced, reinforced and practised. The curriculum is very carefully planned and the manner in which this learning takes place cannot be recreated by giving a child work to do at home or during the holiday. We recognise that there will be situations when absence is unavoidable, due to illness, bereavement, religious observance etc and staff will endeavour to give additional time to children in these cases. However this cannot be extended to pupils whose parents have chosen to take their child out of school in term time.

Information about attendance will be shared regularly with Parents and Carers through school newsletters and on our school website.

AIMS

- To maximise attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all associated with the school
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the educational welfare service and multi-agency teams

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governing Body is responsible for

- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.

- Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Have a clear, written school Attendance Policy and evaluate its effectiveness.
- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most within school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of Pupil Premium Funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Have a designated attendance champion (Headteacher) in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the Attendance Policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Make sure staff receive training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.

Headteacher is responsible for

- Has overall responsibility for attendance
 - Has a clear, written school Attendance Policy and ensures the implementation of this policy – ensuring compliance with DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2022 - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
 - Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2022 - [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
 - Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
 - Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
 - Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
 - Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
 - Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this

cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Undertake home visits in line with your safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school Attendance Policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring all staff members:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
 - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families

- use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice, for example through at least fortnightly whole school attendance reviews
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME

Staff members are responsible for

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
 - Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
 - Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
 - Informing the Headteacher of any concerns;
 - Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
 - Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
 - Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
 - Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
 - Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently
- May follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence

- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

Pupils at risk of severe or persistent absence – good practice recommendations (this list is not exhaustive)

- Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

This may include:

- lesson resources
- buddy support
- one to one input
- meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
- establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets.

This may include:

- lunchtime arrangements
- support with uniform, transport, or emotional wellbeing
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support)
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time

Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

- Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's Attendance Policy.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.

- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

School Office

- Prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of SIMS Attendance System
- Monitor and track attendance patterns and punctuality for all children
- If the parent/carer have not provided a reason for absence, the office will endeavour to contact parents/ carers on the first day of a child's absence to establish the reason for the absence
- Attempt to ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of the week
- Make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised

Working with the Local Authority/Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)

- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
- Statutory intervention can include:
 - Parenting Contract
 - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
 - Parenting Order
 - Education Supervision Order
 - Prosecution

ADMINISTRATION

Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are contractually required to take an Attendance Register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The school uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

Registers are completed carefully and accurately as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a Register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents and carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

We use the codes as recommended by www.gov.uk and Hertfordshire County Council.

THE SCHOOL DAY - PUNCTUALITY

The school is open for 32.5 hours per week, daily from 8.45am until 3.15pm.

So that the school day may begin promptly and calmly **children are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.55am at the latest**. Punctuality is essential for classroom routines and children arriving late causes disruption and distraction.

Morning registration takes place from 8.55am for all children. Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm for the Lower School and 1.30pm for the Upper School (due to split lunchtimes).

At St Andrew's School the morning Register will be "open" at 8.55 am and "close" at **9.15am**.

- The register will be open for no longer than 20 minutes after the session begins.
- If pupils arrive after the register has closed at 9.15am parents/carers must provide a satisfactory explanation to ensure their child/ren will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- If pupils arrive after the register has closed and parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory explanation their child/ren will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

Lateness

Hertfordshire County Council define "Late" in two separate ways:

- L – Late (before Registers close). This is classed as the child being present, just Late.
- U – Late (after Registers close). This is classed as an unauthorised absence unless clear reason is given (eg doctor's appointment).

The school doors are closed at 8.55am and pupils arriving after this time must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.

Following Up Lateness

Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher. Opportunities and suggestions will be put in place to improve punctuality.

ABSENCES

Notification must be provided for all absences from school.

- If your child is absent from school for any reason, a telephone call or email to the school office must be made as soon as possible on the day of absence.
- Parents and Carers are expected to ring or email on each subsequent day of absence.
- Where Office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact the parents or carers by telephone.
- Absences are only authorised by the Headteacher.
- School may decide **not** to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.
- If absence is recurring, following a pattern, or if there are concerns in general about attendance, school will follow the procedure outlined in the Flow Chart in Appendix 2.
- Doctor certificates may be requested in long term or recurring sickness.
- The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.
- If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.
- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

PUPILS AT RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

School is expected to:

- proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
- Act 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.

PUPILS WHO ARE PERSISTENTLY ABSENT

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

PUPILS WHO ARE SEVERELY ABSENT

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

Pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and teachers must ensure this cohort is made the top priority for action and support.

You must be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.

Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that school ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Absence from school due to medical or dental appointments will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/ Carers are encouraged however to make all medical appointments out of school hours if possible.

LEAVING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified. The Office Staff will sign children both in and out of school.

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

We greatly value the positive relationships between parents and the school and we do not want the issue of holidays to create a conflict in this relationship.

Holiday during term-time will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed with the Headteacher.

A pupil who takes 10 days absence will miss 50 hours of education that cannot be repeated; in addition their attendance will automatically fall by 5.3%.

All requests for leave of absence of more than 10 school days can only be authorised by the Governing Body (Chair of Governors).

THE PROCEDURE AT ST ANDREW'S FOR REQUESTING TIME OUT OF SCHOOL IS AS FOLLOWS:

- If after considering all the options, parents still decide that their child needs to be out of school, for however long, they must email admin@standrews236.herts.sch.uk with information about dates and reasons for the absence. The parent or carer who has made the request will be informed whether their request has been authorised or not and the current attendance (percentage) of their child will be shared with them. (see Appendix 1)

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

All absences will be reported to the parents and carers at the end of the academic year via the child's school report.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Attendance data for every child will be analysed regularly, at least fortnightly, by the Headteacher and shared with the Attendance Governor, to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with incomplete weeks: Monday and Friday absence: lateness: all children with attendance causing concern. Individual cases will be identified and the reasons checked. Action will be taken where necessary.

Staff also monitor attendance through CPOMs for some children when the need arises.

The Headteacher and the Governor responsible for attendance will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend the attendance target to the Governors if necessary.

In this school we wish to be responsive to the needs of individual families while also seeking to put the highest priority on School Attendance. This policy reflects our genuine commitment to high standards of teaching and learning through good attendance levels and partnerships with parents.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (FROM KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2018)

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safe-guarding possibilities.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future.

If any absence is unexplained or/and unreasonable the Headteacher/DSL will promptly seek advice from Hertfordshire County Council.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

Follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a Fixed Penalty Notice - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absenceholiday>

Appendix 1: Email re leave of absence



St Andrew's CE Primary School
Tower Hill Much Hadham
Herts SG10 6DL

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Dimond

Tel: 01279 842626

E-mail: admin@standrews236.herts.sch.uk

Dear Parent / Carer

Leave of Absence

We understand that you are considering making a request for your child to be given time away from school.

The Government, Local Authority and School are attempting to dissuade parents and carers from taking children out of school **for other than wholly exceptional or unavoidable circumstances**.

The Government, Local Authority and School take the view that taking children out of school during term time can be damaging to a child's educational progress for two reasons. Firstly, children find it very difficult to catch up on the learning that they have missed and in the longer term this can have a negative impact on their progress. Secondly, and as importantly, children can be given a very unhelpful message about the value and importance of going to school.

As parents and carers you will want the best education for your child. By taking holidays during the designated holiday periods, you will be supporting your child's full school attendance, learning and development.

In Hertfordshire, parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice of up to £120 if your child has more than 7.5 days unauthorised absence in any one term. Every child's attendance will be monitored monthly by a Governor and any concerns raised will be investigated.

Your request has been considered at an attendance meeting between myself and our Chair of Governors.

In this instance your request has been unauthorised.

For your information, your child's attendance is currently at ...% for this academic year.

Yours faithfully,

Caroline Dimond
Headteacher

Appendix 2

Attendance – Flow Chart for Process

Headteacher will call the parent/carer of any child whose attendance is causing concern to offer support to improve child's attendance



Letter 1 (Appendix 3) – send if still causing concern



If still causing concern despite the interventions above
-invite parent/carers to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and create a joint Attendance Action Plan with weekly monitoring



If still causing concern despite steps taken above - issue Letter 2 (including medical evidence - Appendix 4)



Referral to County Attendance Team (LAAO)

Appendix 3



St Andrew's CE Primary School
Tower Hill Much Hadham
Herts SG10 6DL

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Dimond

Tel: 01279 842626

E-mail: admin@standrews236.herts.sch.uk

Dear

Our records show that since the beginning of this academic year attendance has been%. This level of attendance is well below the school's minimum target attendance of 96%.

Ongoing poor attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

We wish to help to improve **his/her** attendance. If you would like to discuss 's attendance please contact myself on the school number 01279 842626 and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting.

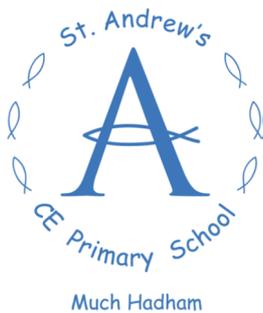
We would appreciate your support to make sure 's attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Caroline Dimond
Headteacher

Appendix 4



St Andrew's CE Primary School
Tower Hill Much Hadham
Herts SG10 6DL

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Dimond

Tel: 01279 842626

E-mail: admin@standrews236.herts.sch.uk

Dear

I refer to my letter of regarding**'s** attendance.

Since the start of the School year has been absent for «**total_of_specified_codes**» sessions. This is concerning as it means**'s** attendance overall is «**percentage_attendance**»% which is significantly below the School's minimum target of 96%.

We understand that some absence due to illness may be unavoidable. However it is important the School are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

Due to the large amount of absence has had, we now feel there is a genuine and reasonable doubt around the level of illness your child is experiencing. Therefore, we will require a form of medical evidence such as an appointment card/text message/picture of medication etc, in order to authorise any future periods of absence.

We will continue to monitor attendance. If you wish to discuss **his/her** attendance with us please contact me on the school number 01279 842626. I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Caroline Dimond
Headteacher