

St Aidan's C of E Primary School



Attendance Policy

The policy was approved by	Full Governors
Date:	Autumn 2024
Review:	Autumn 2025

Statutory Requirements

Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

This policy links to the Government Publication 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' August 2024.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/124422/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

A letter or a telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

AIMS

1. To improve the overall percentage of learners at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including learners, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and learners.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving attendance at St Aidan's C of E Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community and associated agencies— pupils, parents, staff and Governors.

Parents/Carers

Parents or carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit state to learn.

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school as soon as possible – by phone call on the first day of absence followed by a written communication.

A pupil's absence from school is considered to be unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.

Parents/carers should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy or communication problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

School

St Aidan's C of E Primary School expects pupils to attend regularly, to arrive on time, be properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

The school will work closely with parents/carers should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.

The school will keep individual records of attendance and punctuality.

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absences, liaising closely with parents/carers.

The School Day and Registration Procedures

Attendance Co-ordinators: Debbie Sutcliffe, Janette Crank and Rachel Fisher.

The register is a legal document and must be completed punctually and accurately as part of an orderly start to the school session.

If your child is not able to attend school, you are required to inform the school office by 9.15am. by telephone. The office is staffed from 8.00am and messages may be left on the answer phone prior to this time.

Children are admitted into school between 8:45am and 8:50am. Registration begins at 8:50am and doors close at 8:55am. Registration ends at 8:55am. Children arriving after this time must enter school through the school office with support from a parent/carer who will electronically enter into the Sign In App system why the child is late. The code 'L' will be added to the register in this situation.

Children arriving after 9:30am must be signed into school at the school office by a parent or carer. Arrival after 9:30am will be considered as an unauthorised absence for the morning session and a letter 'U' will be recorded on school registers. Other codes may be considered taking into account each contextual explanation offered by the parent/carer. The final decision of which code to be entered will be made by the Headteacher.

Afternoon registers close at 12.30pm for Reception Class and 1pm for Classes from Year 1 to Year 6.

Important –First Day response

If a child is absent from register and no message has been received by the school office as to why, attempts should be made by the office staff to contact the parents before 9.30am to ascertain why the child is not in school. If contact with the family cannot be made school safeguarding procedures will be actioned.

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Parents should provide an explanation of all absences. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness/ illness of the child
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (evidence should be provided to indicate time and date of appointment)
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement
- absence with permission e.g. music examinations

Absence from school **will not** be authorised for:

- Family holidays
- Shopping
- birthdays

Absence from school will also be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming;
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?

You must submit an Absence Request form at least 20 days before the proposed absence see Appendix 1.

It will be for your child's Headteacher to decide as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

Absence

- Parents will be contacted by their child's class teacher to see what support can be offered if a possible attendance issue has been identified or if attendance is between 93% and 94% without good reason.
- Following on from this, if attendance is still an issue or falls between 90% and 92% without good reason, the Headteacher will contact the child's parent and may invite them to an attendance support meeting.- Appendix 3
- If there is a severe issue with attendance or a child is classed as persistently absent (attendance lower than 90%) without good reason, the Headteacher will work with other agencies to support the family with a view to improving attendance. – Appendix 4

Guidance for Parents on Penalty Notices

The National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, was introduced following changes to the law. These Government regulations came into effect from 19 August 2024.

In line with the 'Working Together to improve school attendance government publication', St Aidan's C of E Primary School will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate, and parents/carers are encouraged to communicate with the school should any support be required to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

There is a national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered. Children who arrive late to school after registers close (9:30am) will be classed as absent for 1 session. Therefore, 10 'lates' within a 10 week rolling period would result in a penalty notice being considered.

Families are not able to take a child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

The penalty fine is £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

In line with 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', St Aidan's C of E Primary School operates on a **support first** basis. Our strategies for support and promoting good attendance are listed here:

- St Aidan's C of E Primary School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed and feel that their presence in school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent/late.
- Attendance and punctuality data will be regularly collected and used to help identify patterns, set targets and inform policy/ practice.
- Parents will be reminded regularly via newsletters and parents' evenings the importance of and to celebrate good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any **extended** period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return in line with the school's blended learning policy.
- The Headteacher will report to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - TESSA, Social Services, Education Welfare Officer, School Nurse, Mental Health Support Team and other agencies - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will liaise, where necessary, with the Education Welfare Department at St Helens Council in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

St. Aidan's Church of England Primary School

**Application for Leave of Absence during term time**

From September 2013 the law was changed regarding holidays during term time. The Headteacher can now only grant leave of absence in **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances. Parents applying to remove their child from school during term time must give advance notice and should provide evidence to support the application. Evidence may include a letter from an employer, or in the case of Armed Forces or Emergency Services a Superior Officer. The Headteacher will then consider authorising /~~unauthorising~~ the absence.

Please be aware you may be issued with a Penalty Notice if you decide to go ahead with an unauthorised absence during term time. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child. Further Information on the law regarding Leave of Absence during term time and Penalty Notices for unauthorised school absence can be found at GOV.UK.

Names of Pupil(s)	Year Group

Name of Parents/ Caregivers	
1.	Relationship:
2.	Relationship:
Address (if different from address of child):	
Telephone Number:	

Date of Leave of Absence	
From:	To:
Total number of days:	

Please list your reasons including any exceptional circumstances for removing your child/children from school during term time. Please attached any appropriate evidence to support your application.

I understand that the absences applied for may be recorded as ~~unauthorised absence~~ on my child/children's attendance record and that if I go ahead with an unauthorised absence I may be issued with one or more Penalty Notices.

Signed: Date:

~~Authorised/Unauthorised~~ Headteacher
Letter sent: Yes/No Date:

St. Aidan's Church of England Primary School



Date

Dear

Re: Pupil Name **DOB:** **Current attendance:** %

St Aidan's C of E Primary School's attendance target is 96%.

This letter has been sent to inform you that a possible issue has been identified with your child's attendance, or your child's attendance has fallen below the expected school attendance target of 95% at the end of the Spring term. Reports of illness are recorded and considered in our analysis, and unauthorised absences given including family holidays in term time are also reviewed and included. Enclosed is a copy of your child's attendance certificate.

Your child's attendance is now a concern and needs to improve. Please ensure that your child attends school every day unless they are genuinely unwell. If your child is absent through illness, we expect you to provide medical evidence to support the absence.

Failure to improve your child's attendance may result in a school attendance meeting to discuss the issues and concerns around your child's absence and support available to improve the situation.

If you would like to discuss this letter or ~~you would like~~ to access support to improve your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me at school on 01744 678042.

Yours Sincerely,

St. Aidan's Church of England Primary School



Date

Dear

Re: Pupil Name: **DOB:** **Current attendance:** %

St Aidan's C of E Primary School's attendance target is 96%.

This letter has been sent to inform you that there is a possible issue with your child's attendance or your child's attendance has fallen further below the expected school attendance target and is between 90% and 92% at the end of the Spring term. Reports of illness are recorded and considered in our analysis, and unauthorised absences given including family holidays in term time are also reviewed and included. Please find enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate.

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, the government categorise them as a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA). The government count all absences whether they are authorised or unauthorised.

Your child's attendance is still a concern and needs to improve. Please ensure that your child attends school every day unless they are genuinely unwell. If your child is absent through illness, we expect you to provide medical evidence to support the absence.

Failure to improve your child's attendance from this time will result in a school attendance meeting.

If you would like to discuss this letter or you would like to access support to improve your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office on 01744 678042.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 4

St. Aidan's Church of England Primary School



Date

Dear

Re: Pupil Name:

St Aidan's C of E Primary School's attendance target is 96%.

This letter is to inform you that your child is a Persistent Absentee 'PA' because they have 90% attendance or below without good reason. Reports of illness are recorded and considered in our analysis, and unauthorised absences given including family holidays in term time are also reviewed and included.

The Government count all absence, even that agreed by school, because poor attendance may impact on your child's ability to achieve.

School has to identify PA pupils and work with any without good reason to improve their attendance. This means that as a parent you are invited to a school meeting to discuss your child's absence. You will be asked to sign a Parent Contract to improve attendance.

The date and time of this meeting is: _____

From the time you receive this letter, you need to provide medical evidence to support your child's absence. This can be one or more of the following:

- a dated appointment card
- copy or sight of prescription medicine
- care at the chemist evidence
- medical appointment letter (we do not expect you to ask the doctor for a letter because this may cost money).

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 you are responsible as a Parent to ensure your child attends school regularly. Parents of pupils who do not attend school regularly may be subjected to legal Sanctions such as Penalty Notice Fines or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

If you would like to discuss this letter, please contact school.

Yours Sincerely