

'Shine like stars in the world.'

Philippians 2:15



St Paul's CE Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Our Vision

Our school is one family, united in love and deeply rooted in our Christian values, where together on life's journey we flourish, striving for excellence in all that we do. Inspired by the transformation of St Paul, and enlightened by the glory of God, we will shine like stars to make the world a better place.

Our Core Values

Love, Forgiveness, Faith, Friendship, Hope and Peace.

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A Whole School Approach

At St. Paul's, our core Christian values of *Love, Forgiveness, Faith, Friendship, Hope and Peace* are at the heart of our school. Adults model the values and other standards of behaviour, including regular attendance at school and punctuality, so that a consistent approach is maintained throughout the school.

This consistent, whole school approach at St. Paul's results in a positive, calm and safe environment in which all pupils can learn, without disruption.

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

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- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data through the Curriculum Committee
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 The Admin Assistant is responsible for monitoring and analysing attendance and punctuality

The Admin Assistant is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data alongside the Head of School (see section 7)
- Providing regular attendance reports to senior leaders and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head of School for attendance
- Working alongside the Head of School, with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via RM Integris.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.7 Parents/carers

The school operates a soft start from 8.45 – 8.55am. Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

At St. Paul's, we keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again during the afternoon session. It marks whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We also record:

- Whether or not the absence is authorised
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

➤ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Arrival time

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am each day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am. Pupils arriving between 9am and 9.15am will be recorded as late (L). Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as unauthorized absence (U). The register for the second session will be taken in the afternoon, according to when this session begins.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7). A message must be left on the office answer phone or sent via email.

Absence due to illness will be marked as authorized, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

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

However, we strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorize.

Requesting a leave of absence

Parents should request a leave of absence by emailing: office@st-pauls.enfield.sch.uk

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

At St. Paul's, we understand the importance for all pupils to be in school on time every day. We want pupils to start the day in a positive and calm way, following clear and safe routines. Senior Leaders and class teachers welcome pupils and parents into the playgrounds every morning and are aware of those families, who arrive after the gates close.

The Head of School and Admin Assistant work closely with families, to understand the importance of punctuality and the impact of arriving late to class. Serious concerns are logged onto our CPoms system and a letter of concern may be sent to the family. Following this, a meeting is arranged with the Head of School and the parents, to find ways to improve high levels of poor punctuality.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, a text and email is also sent.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- On occasions, senior leaders will visit the home of the pupil, if there is sufficient concern to warrant a visit

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance through the end of year report. The majority of parents have instant access to attendance data through the school's Parent Portal and mobile app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with a leave of absence request form (see appendix 2 below). The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Bereavement and/or illness of close family member
- Filming and sporting opportunities outside of school.

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

In line with Enfield Local Authority Policy, penalty notices are issued if a pupil has 20 or more unauthorised absences within a 3 month period, or if there has been an unauthorised leave of absence of 5 or more consecutive days.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 22-28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by an Executive Headteacher, Head of School, local authority officer or the police.

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

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

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school, we know that pupils learn best when their attendance is high. The school expects pupils to regularly attend school and celebrates high attendance through recognition and praise. High attendance is attendance above 95%.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school closely monitors attendance using RM Integris. This system gives clear data around all forms of absence and attendance. In addition, senior leaders and the Admin Assistant:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. This may be shared with class teachers, if relevant
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

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- Provide opportunities for attendance data to be shared with class teachers
- Work with pupils and families to improve attendance
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Send letters to parents informing them of concerns
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, or every two years by members of the Governing Board.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Curriculum Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

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D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		

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G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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

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Appendix 2 : Leave in term time request form

Leave of Absence Request Form – please read both sides of this form

Schools can authorise absence only in exceptional circumstances. At St. Paul's School, we aim to reduce the number of learning days lost through absence. All pupils at the school are given an attendance target of 95% as a minimum and this represents **good** attendance.

Please note: There is no general right for a school to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission, the absence will be unauthorised. This could also lead to legal action. You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Parents/Carers are required to complete this form and return it to the school office.

Child's Full
Name:.....Class.....

....

Date of absence requested: From.....To.....(inclusive)

Please provide details of request, along with evidence/letters or appointment times.

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Name of parent/carer:..... Relationship to child:.....

I/We understand that the school is not obliged to authorise this request.

Signed:..... Date:.....

(For office use only) **Decision re: Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Coding (please circle appropriate code):

C – Leave of Absence authorised by school	D – Dual Registration
M – Medical/Dental Appointment	R – Religious Observance
P – Approved Sporting Activity	B - Performance/Filming activity

O – Unauthorised Absence

Other (please specify) –

Signature of Executive Head/Head of School:

Date:

Please Note: Holiday absences which have not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised absences and may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

Family holidays and extended trips aboard during term time

You are requested under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. Amendments to the 2006 Regulations in Education (Pupil Registration) came into force in 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Before completing this application, we would advise that you consider how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show that **10 days of absence across an academic year** will have a negative effect on attainment, well-being and wider life chances. Schools are not obliged to provide work for pupils taking leave of absence.

The government advises that any absence after a refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school. As you may be aware, an accumulation of unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you, through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates Court.

If the Executive Head of Head of School does not approve an application for a leave of absence, an appeal can be made through the Board of Governors. This cannot be made retrospectively.

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Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences.

Where a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 days) due either to a holiday that has been taken without permission or where a parent has been refused a request for leave of absence for 10 or more sessions (5 days), a penalty notice may be issued.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 per pupil, if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. This rises to £120 if the fine is not paid within 21 days. The local authority may then consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

Reviewed by Clare Cresswell	Autumn Term 2024		
Approved by:	Curriculum & School Activities		
Next Revision (Please highlight as appropriate)	Annual	Bi-annual	Tri- annual
To be reviewed	Autumn Term 2025		