



Absence & Attendance Policy

October 2023

Rooted in faith, family and friendship.
Growing in hope and aspiration.
Flourishing in love.

'...these three remain: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.'
1 Corinthians 13 v13

Our vision is to be a deeply caring, successful school that develops children into confident, thoughtful and responsible citizens today and into the future. Through our embedded Christian values, we strive for all to flourish, recognising that together our good works can make a real difference.

We strive to illuminate our vision through our embedded Christian values of:

FRIENDSHIP, HOPE, COMPASSION, FORGIVENESS, TRUST and THANKFULNESS.

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At St Anne's CE Primary School we believe that in order to facilitate quality teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, anti-bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

Good attendance is highlighted and rewarded each week in our Celebration Assembly, with our school Attendance Trophy being presented to the class with the highest weekly attendance. Certificates and end-of-year vouchers are awarded as additional incentives to pupils in recognition of their high levels of attendance.

At St Anne's CE Primary School, we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Ensuring this Attendance Policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents
- Intervening early when necessary and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parents of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure that their child receives full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (which can be fulfilled by home education).
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is the Headteacher and can be contacted via:

enquiries@st-annes.lincs.sch.uk

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- Working with the HT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals
- Regularly reviewing attendance data
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school and assumes the role of Attendance Officer
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

The Attendance Officer is responsible for the overall strategic approach to attendance in school:

- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change
- The attendance of their children at school
- Promoting good attendance with their children

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

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

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Attendance Expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school gates are opened to pupils at 8:40am and all pupils are expected to be on the school site by 8:50am. The school day starts at 8:55am (9am in YR and Y1) and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:30 am, which will last until 10.45am, and a lunch break at midday which will last until 1:00pm. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be taken at 8:50 am. A circle will be marked in the register for any pupil who is not in their classroom by the time the register is returned to the school office.
- The morning register will close at 9:10am.
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm.
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present in class by this time.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Absence Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, the school administrator will contact the parent as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Teachers will speak to parents at Consultation Meetings (Parents' Evenings) if a child's attendance is causing concern. If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent. Additionally, parents will receive a written letter each full term if their child's absence remains below 90%. This will also offer support to improve absence, where valid. The school is very aware of children who may have long-term ill health and would be very mindful of this. Parents would not receive a letter in this case.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school may remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance Register

The school uses Integris (electronic management system) to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments

- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for seven years.

Authorising Parental Absence Requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher. The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of Absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is very unlikely to grant leave of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 95%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious Observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND and Health-related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments

- Incorporating a pastoral support plan
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework
- Using an internal or external specialist
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out
- Temporary late starts or early finishes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs

Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Officer will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents and talking to them
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance meeting times

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g., they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence where applicable, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher may issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training of Staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development. Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96.5%.

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St Anne's CE Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Attendance is analysed weekly.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by staff are passed immediately to the HT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the HT daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a discussion with the parent will ensue, explaining that their attendance is a concern and is being monitored.
6. If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent. This will also offer support to improve absence, where valid. Targets to improve attendance may be set at this stage. Additionally, parents will receive a written letter each full term if their child's absence remains below 90%.
7. If targets are not met, Education Welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice may be issued.

Agreed and signed at the Full Governing Body meeting on

Name: Mr J A Austin

Role: Headteacher

Name: Mr T Woodlock

Role: Chair of Governors

Date: October 2023