



St Herbert's RC Primary School

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by Governors on: 10.07.24

Date to be reviewed: Summer 2027

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: *P Devine (Chair)*

St. Herbert's R C Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

This policy is set within the context of the School Mission Statement:

"Strong in Faith, Hope and Love, for the Common Good"

and the School Ethos:

"By loving one another as God loves us, we can achieve spiritually and academically"

1 Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so (**see Appendix A for exceptional circumstances**). We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to 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 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 parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient 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.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Mrs Collins, and can be contacted via the school office. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

- 1.2 Under the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024** the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. Each child should strive to have at least 97% attendance, apart from those with chronic health issues.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian, and accepted the explanation as legitimate. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this would not be accepted by the school as a legitimate explanation, and the absence would not be authorised.
- Please also refer to **Appendix A** for exceptional circumstances.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

2.3 Persistent absence

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

3 Procedures

Our school will undertake to adhere to the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the LA Attendance Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Oldham LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Leadership Team and the School Attendance Officer.

4 Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

4.1 Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day,
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers,
- Informing the School Attendance Officer where there are concerns and acting upon them,
- Providing background information to support referrals,
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns,
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness,
- Following up absences with immediate requests for an explanation which should be noted inside the register,
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 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.

4.3 Administration staff & School Attendance Officer

Staff in the School Office, together with the School Attendance Officer, are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information,

- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence,
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed,
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made (first day calling),
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early,
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the School Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher,
- Making referrals to the LA Attendance Service,
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's LA Attendance Officer,
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence,
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

4.4 Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment,
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence, via telephone **before 8:45am** – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last eg: one school day etc,
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. Please try and arrange these appointments outside of school hours if possible.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised,
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details, including more than one emergency contact number.

4.5 Governing Body

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 SLT 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 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5 Registration

All the school doors open at **8.45am** until 8.55 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by **8.55am** and by **1.10pm**. These registers are completed using SIMs software, by the teaching staff.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

6 Lateness

Once the doors are closed at **8.55am** the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from **8.55am** will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than **9.15am** will be marked as having an **unauthorised absence** for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a medical appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

7 If a child is absent

- 7.1** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 7.2** Please note: “children who have Norovirus symptoms must be absent from school for 48 hours, after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea to stop the spread of infection to other children and staff.” (NHS guidelines).
- 7.3** If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

8 Requests for leave of absence

- 8.1** We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event/exceptional circumstance. We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance, and complete the ‘leave of absence’ form.
- 8.2** Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday. With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.
- 8.3** Religious Observance:
Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in 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.

9 Long-term absence

- 9.1** When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to provide home learning, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 9.2** If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will provide work in line with the Home Learning Policy using their remote learning plan.
- 9.3** Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

10 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 10.1** The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school to work together to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services and other local partners, who will work together to provide support. Depending on the circumstances this may result in a formal 'attendance contract' between the parent, pupil, school and/or Local Authority (LA).
- 10.2** The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. **Please note: If unauthorised absence levels reach 10 sessions or more (each day is two sessions, morning and afternoon) penalty charges will be issued, and if unpaid parents will be prosecuted. Holidays in term-time will be unauthorised absence (please see 'Request for Leave of Absence paragraph').**
- 10.3 Educational Neglect:** under certain circumstances, persistent absence can be deemed as neglect and action may be taken in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

11 School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Who Are Absent From Education

A child who is absent from education for prolonged periods or repeat occasions can be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, and to help prevent the risks of them missing education in the future.

Schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns.

The Attendance Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

12 Rewards for good attendance

- 12.1** All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive recognition of their achievement eg: a special treat. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

13 Attendance targets

- 13.1** The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting, and in line with DfE requirements. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

14 Monitoring and review

- 14.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 14.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 14.3** The rates of attendance will be reported on the school website, and in the termly Headteacher's Governors' report.
- 14.4** Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school attendance officer immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- 14.5** This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.
This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

15 Data Protection

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Data Audit For This Policy					
What?	Probable Content	Why?	Who?	Where?	When?
Registration/ Admissions Data Records of attendance	Name, DOB, Address, Telephone, Parental Details, Medical Information (if relevant), Attendance details	Monitor, maintain and improve the attendance in school. Legal requirement.	Class teacher/ Senior Leaders/ Admin. staff	SIMs (School Management Information System)	Computer retains copy of records in 'archive'.

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has few/No data compliance requirements	Has a moderate level of data compliance requirements	Has a high level of data compliance requirements
✓		

Appendix A

There may be occasions where government guidance supercedes this policy and therefore the relevant guidance at that time will be followed. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, children self-isolating and provided with remote learning will be marked as present with a separate coding system.