



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
Review Date	July 2023
Date Determined by Governing Body	07.07.2023
Next review date	Summer term 2024

1. Vision

We want everyone who is a part of St. Katharine's to know that they are unique and that they can flourish and make a difference in God's world, through living out the values of Grace, Integrity and Aspiration, now and in the future.

1.1

We recognise the fundamental role **regular, punctual** attendance plays in enabling children to reach their full academic potential.

Punctuality: Children who are regularly late miss certain essential parts of the school day such as: settling down to get ready to learn, early morning learning tasks, reading, grammar, phonics and arithmetic, as well as an explanation of the day ahead.

Attendance: When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their learning and do less well academically, impacting on exam results and future career pathways. The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as part of a school team or club, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting social skills, confidence and self esteem.

It is essential that our pupils form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that excellent attendance is maintained throughout their school career. This is particularly important following the disruption to education during and following the Covid pandemic.

1.2 Aims and expectations

- We want all the children to benefit from regular and punctual attendance, so that they have full access to the curriculum we provide; issues are identified and acted upon as quickly as possible.
- We want parents and carers to have a clear understanding of their own responsibilities
- We want staff to recognise the valuable role they play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance. We aim to accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence
- Will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance
- We will build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- We will share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

In order to achieve our aims, we recognise that everyone within the school community will need to work together.

We expect children to:

- arrive at school on time with the right equipment for the day
- attend school regularly
- feel confident to talk to staff about issues affecting their regular and punctual attendance

We expect parents/carers to:

- fulfil their legal requirements in ensuring their children attend school every day and arrive in school between 8:45am and 8.55am, equipped and ready to start their learning
- notify the school by 9.00am on a daily basis (email office@skps.email or tel. 01202 426663) if a child is prevented from attending school for any reason or is going to be late. A pupil's absence will be considered unauthorised in the first instance, once an explanation is given a suitable absence code will be applied by the school, this may be an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- work with the school to support excellent attendance and commit to engaging positively with the school and the local authority should attendance become a concern

In turn, families can expect that staff will:

- record their children's attendance on a daily basis by 9.30am, accurately and in an efficient way
- make every reasonable effort to contact (by phone, email and text) the child's parent or carer, followed by any other emergency contacts shared with the school by the parent, when their child fails to attend school without good reason
- deal discreetly and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent or carer
- make all efforts to encourage regular attendance and excellent punctuality
- ensure that all families, pupils, staff and governors are familiar with our policy and procedures.

*In addition, the Head and **Deputy Head (nominated Attendance Champion)** will take responsibility for:*

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism – aided by the attendance officer
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness – aided by the school office and the Family Support Worker
- Authorising/un-authorising and responding to leave of absence requests on behalf of the governing body
- Making referrals to the Local Authority's School Inclusion Service – aided by the Family Support Worker
- Liaising with external agencies such as social care as appropriate – aided by the Family Support Worker
- Reporting to parents, the governing body and the Local Authority as appropriate
- Making decisions concerning school closure in line with Local Authority guidance
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, following the Local Authority's procedures for a Child Missing Education
- Developing strategies to promote good attendance.
- Make appropriate safeguarding decisions alongside the DSL team.

Governors will:

- Monitor overall attendance figures
- Work with the Head, Deputy Head and staff to improve attendance
- Liaise through the Chair of Governors with the Head about school closure.

The Local Authority School Inclusion Service will:

- support the school in expecting parents and carers to make sure that pupils attend school on a regular basis
- support the school in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Therefore a pattern of unauthorised absence, which can include taking holidays in term time, can result in a Penalty Notice or further legal action.

2. Promoting attendance

We encourage excellent attendance by:

- greeting children and families with a warm welcome at the start of each school day
- accurately completing registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon
- delivering high quality learning opportunities to all pupils, motivating them to attend school
- following up absence in a prompt and timely manner on the first day of absence and throughout where appropriate
- tracking attendance carefully to identify any attendance patterns or trends
- informing parents and carers if the child's attendance is a cause for concern
- alerting parents and carers at the beginning of the school year of the importance of building a good record in attendance, which will feature on the child's end of year report
- giving parents and carers an indication of the accumulating record if there is a cause for concern.
- sharing and discussing attendance data with parents
- teaching children to value good attendance, and praising them when there is an improvement in attendance

3. Attendance protocols

Registration

Children should arrive between 8.45 and 8.55 so they are settled and ready for the register at 8.55 am (at which time the school gate also closes). Please note that any child arriving after 8.55am will be classed as a **late arrival**. Late arrival children will be directed through the school's reception area where their name, class and time of arrival will be recorded, together with a reason for their late arrival to school. Any child arriving in school after 9.30am when registration has closed, but before 10am will be marked as a 'late after registers closed'. Any child that does not arrive for the morning session or arrives after 10am will be classed as an **unauthorised absence**.

Absence

To ensure the continued safety and welfare of the children, it is essential that the school is notified of the nature of your child's absence e.g. illness, medical treatment, compassionate grounds, secondary school visit, music/performance exams, etc either by a telephone call or an email to the school office. **This should be done on the first day of absence before 9.00am.**

Once registers have been completed, office staff are required to contact the parent/carer, followed by any other emergency contacts shared with the school by the parent of absent children who have not either telephoned, emailed or previously messaged the school explaining the absence, to establish that they are safe. If we cannot make contact with families, we may need to contact social care or the police.

Regular appointments e.g. doctors and dentists

We encourage parents to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Of course, the school appreciates that there are situations when this is not possible e.g. hospital appointments or meetings with specialists. If a medical appointment must take place during the school day, the school requires proof where possible of the appointment (for example an appointment letter) to be emailed/sent to the School Office.

Late Arrival to school

We encourage parents to ensure arrival at school by 8.55am each day. If this is not met the school do the following to monitor lateness:

- Log every child that arrives late at school daily
- Enters onto the registration system all lateness times/reasons
- Lateness analysis monitored weekly and FSW notified of any children of concern
- Lateness reviews and letters to parents half-termly. Family Support Worker will make contact with families where concern is identified

Tracking of attendance

We track school attendance via our school management information system on a daily basis to ensure registers are completed accurately and to follow up on absence. We also regularly monitor attendance and absence data to identify pupils, trends of absence or cohorts who need support with attendance.

Please see below for guidance on attendance percentages and thresholds for concern.

Percentage	Implication
97-100%	Attendance is good to excellent; pupils and families should try their best to maintain high levels of attendance
95-96.9%	Attendance levels are beginning to cause concern; class teacher will initiate a conversation with families to identify issues
90%-94.9%	Attendance levels causing more significant concern; DHT will email parents to alert them to their child's attendance data. A follow up phone call may be needed to discuss any supportive actions.
Below 90%	Attendance levels have decreased to an unacceptable level, now classified as persistent absence. DHT will email parents as well as holding follow up phone calls. Parents may be invited in for a face-to-face meeting with DHT/FSW to identify barriers and discuss any supportive actions.
Continued Persistent Absence	Where appropriate, school will liaise with BCP School Inclusion Team to advise on potential next steps, including 'Fast Track' meeting and/or fixed penalty notices.

Communication with parents

Term	Actions	Ongoing
Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive their child's current attendance figure. Attendance Leaflet sent out to all parents. Attendance of 90%-95% will trigger an email alert from school. Attendance of 90% and below will trigger an email alert and phone call from school. Where appropriate, school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss attendance. 	Face-to-face conversations on the gate. Follow up phone calls to discuss attendance trends. Support from FSW. <i>Holidays taken in term time will not be authorised.</i>
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive their child's current attendance figure. Attendance of 90%-95% will trigger an email alert from school. Attendance of 90% and below will trigger an email alert and phone call from school. Where appropriate, school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss attendance. 	
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will receive their child's current attendance data in their school report. Parents will receive an end of year summary report regarding whole school attendance trends. Follow up phone calls will take place with families as part of our ongoing partnership with parents and collaboration about attendance. Where appropriate, school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss attendance. 	
What to remember	Know that our communication is because we care. Know that you are not being singled out. Know that we have a duty to follow up absence and expect an email or call. Know that we are human too. Know that we, and you, are doing our best.	

4. Leave of Absence Requests and exceptional circumstances

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and the school **does not authorise term-time holidays**. If pupils are to reach their potential they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, uninterrupted school attendance is a key factor in helping pupils reach their potential. Every effort should always be made to avoid disruption to a pupil's education.

Head Teachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Head Teacher. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time the Head Teacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. **Additionally, any request must be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school by e-mail.** Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

Parents/Carers will be notified of the Head Teacher's decision in writing at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then parents/carers will be informed of this and made aware that the Local Authority may be asked to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent/carer liable for the offence regarding each of their children.

It is important for parents/carers to note that once the school has requested that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, they will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Local Authority. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.

5. Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letters and notices

We will follow the latest guidance from BCP local authority. Currently, there are two sets of circumstances when a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning may be issued:

- 1) **poor attendance over time** (at least 10% unauthorised absence); initially a formal warning letter of the possibility of a penalty notice (**school concern letter 2**) will be sent, giving 15 school days to effect improvement
- 2) **unauthorised leave of absence (including holidays) taken during term time** (of at least 10 sessions/5 days over the year - this could be one or more periods of absence

There is no statutory right of appeal over a penalty notice. Please refer to the [BCP Penalty Notice Code of Conduct policy](#).

6. Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. The school will therefore share information effectively with the local authority to ensure all children are safe and receiving a suitable education. Any pupils considered to be 'children missing education' will be referred to the Local Authority.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a pupil jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the pupil has left outside of the standard transition point (the child will be moved to former roll). This will involve contacting all emergency contacts and may involve a home visit from the school if the whereabouts of the child are not confirmed.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, the school will delete the child's name from the admission register (the child will be moved to former roll) and inform the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries. The local authority will advise then the child can be moved to former roll.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, Deputy Head and Governor with responsibility for attendance will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the Governing body, and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements. The school keeps accurate records of attendance. It is the responsibility of the Governing body to monitor attendance and to ensure that the school policy is followed consistently and is addressing attendance concerns as a priority. The Governing body will pay particular attention to patterns of persistent absence. In the case of serious concern over attendance the Deputy Head/Headteacher will contact the BCP inclusion team directly for advice and guidance.

The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, but all staff, parents, pupils and Governors share responsibility for excellent punctuality and regular attendance. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- *Child Protection policy* <https://www.stkatharinesceprimary.co.uk/safeguarding-policies>
- *Positive Behaviour policy*
https://www.stkatharinesceprimary.co.uk/_files/ugd/8c7f2d_319c28da0f8348aaba932d8c07f445a1.pdf

and also the following DfE document:

- Working together to improve school attendance May 2022

Information on expectations within BCP from the School Inclusion team can be found here:

- <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/At-school/School-attendance.aspx>