



Attendance Policy 2026/27

Reviewed by	Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
Review Date	June 2026
Date Determined by Governing Body	10.7.26
Next review date	Summer 2027

Our 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.

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.

1. 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
- attend school regularly

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.
- conducting home visits if your child's absence is unexplained or a potential cause for concern
- consider requesting additional evidence for leave purposes (such as flight details, confirmation of illness, etc)

*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 absence, or persistent lateness, or unusual patterns of absence (for example immediately prior to or following a school holiday) - aided by the school office and the Inclusion Team
- 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
- Liaising with external agencies such as social care as appropriate
- 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 10 sessions within a 10 week period, 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.

**Refer to the DfE's summary table of responsibility for school attendance for further details.*

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 between 8.55am and 9.30am will be marked as a 'late' (code L). Any child arriving in school after 9.30am when registration has closed, but before 10am will be marked as a 'late after registers closed' (code U). Any child that does not arrive for the morning session or arrives after 10am will be classed as an **unauthorised absence** (code O) unless an acceptable reason is provided.

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/carers, 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 conduct a home visit and/or 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 the inclusion team notified of any children of concern
- Lateness reviews and letters to parents termly. The Deputy Headteacher or member of the Inclusion Team 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. Where required, targeted support and intervention, will be put in place on an individual basis.

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/a member of the Inclusion team 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.

4. Communication with parents

Ongoing	• Face-to-face conversations on the gate. • Open communication with class teachers and Inclusion Team. • Holidays taken in term time will not be authorised. • Parents are able to access their child's attendance records via Arbor
Actions	• Parents will receive an update from the Headteacher at the start of the year which includes a section on attendance. • Parents will receive their child's current attendance figure (termly). • Attendance Leaflet emailed out to all parents. • Attendance for all pupils will be tracked weekly and parent phone calls may be made by Deputy Head teacher or member of the Inclusion Team when attendance begins to drop. • Attendance of 90%-95% will trigger an email alert from school (termly). • Attendance of 90% and below will trigger an email alert and phone call from school (termly). • Where appropriate, school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss attendance. • Attendance where a child has missed school due to a term time holiday (10 sessions have been missed within 10 school weeks) the LA will consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice in line with local and national guidance. • Offer of support from Inclusion Team who have further expertise and knowledge in supporting pupils with Social and Emotional Needs. • Parents will receive their child's current attendance data in their school report. • Parents may receive an end of year summary report regarding whole school attendance trends to promote awareness and engagement. • 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. • Parents will receive their child's current attendance data in their school report (summer term). • Lateness marks of 5 or above will trigger an email to parents (termly).

5. 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 by completing the 'School application for leave of absence during term time'.** 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.

Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letters and notices

We will follow the most recent guidance and Code of Conduct issued by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council for the issue of penalty notices for non-attendance.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failure to ensure regular school attendance. They can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised absence**, and it is the Headteacher's responsibility to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

In line with the national framework and BCP Code of Conduct, a penalty notice may be considered where a child has **10 or more sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and can include a combination of different types of unauthorised absence, including term-time leave and lateness after the register has closed.

In accordance with the expectation that schools adopt a **support-first approach**, the school will normally work with parents/carers to address attendance concerns before requesting a penalty notice. This may include the issuing of a formal warning letter and a period of monitoring to allow for improvement.

There are two main circumstances in which the school may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice:

- 1. Irregular attendance over time**

Where there is a pattern of unauthorised absence and the national threshold has been met, and support has not been successful or engaged with.

- 2. Unauthorised leave of absence (including holidays)**

Where a child is taken out of school during term time without authorisation and the absence meets the national threshold.

The decision to issue a penalty notice is made by the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual circumstances, the level of support offered and whether the threshold has been met.

There is **no statutory right of appeal** against a penalty notice. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution for the original offence of failing to secure regular attendance. Further information is available in the BCP Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

6. Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in

life. The school will therefore work closely with the Local Authority to ensure all children are safe and receiving a suitable education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, the school will make **reasonable enquiries**, in partnership with the Local Authority, to establish their location. This will include contacting all known emergency contacts and may involve a home visit where appropriate.

A pupil will only be **removed from the admission register** in line with the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024**, and once the school and Local Authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after making reasonable enquiries.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are electively home educating, the school will remove the child's name from the admission register and inform the Local Authority without delay.

A pupil may be removed from roll if they have been absent for **20 consecutive school days** and their whereabouts remain unknown, following all reasonable enquiries carried out by both the school and Local Authority.

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, making recommendations for improvement where necessary.

The school maintains accurate attendance records and analyses data regularly, including monitoring patterns of persistent absence. In cases of concern, the school will work with the BCP Inclusion Team to seek advice and implement appropriate support or intervention.

The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this policy; however, all staff, parents, pupils and Governors share responsibility for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with updated statutory guidance.

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 (updated August 2024)a

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>

8. DfE's Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.