



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Introduction and Definitions

This policy is to enable the St Paul's Steiner School to work positively and clearly with parents in matters relating to attendance. We hope that with this clarity we will be able to support the children's education and fulfil the legal responsibilities lying with the parents and School. Please write or talk to the school before arranging any activity that may get in the way of your child's attendance.

The legal requirements

The law requires that children of compulsory school age must attend regular full-time schooling and that we complete a daily attendance register for the morning and afternoon session that shows whether the pupil has an authorised or unauthorised absence. We consider that children should achieve 96% attendance, which is the expected national average for schools.

We communicate with Access and Engagement Section of our Local Authority (Islington) in case of persistent lateness or unauthorised absence and submit all the requested statistics to the DfE and Ofsted.

At St Paul's Steiner School we:

- Regard any unnecessary absence as undermining the education. Our teaching methods make it almost impossible to catch up with learning and work missed, or for it to be done at home.
- Regard punctuality as healthy and appropriate and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupil's development.
- Do not encourage requests for holidays during term time and we will only give permission in very exceptional circumstances. We have longer holidays than state schools and many independent schools.
- We regard the children's health as paramount and encourage parents of sick children to keep them home until they are fully better and in a fit state to learn

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trustee board

The Trustee board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Monitoring Team

The Monitoring Team consists of the Administration Manager, DSL & DDDLS:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Teacher who works with the Safeguarding Team to tackle persistent absence and arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Children's absence will be monitored on a weekly basis by the class teacher. The registers will be monitored by the Admin manager. If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

3.5 Subject & Cover Teachers

Subject & Cover Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School Staff

The Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Parents are asked to ensure that pupils arrive in school on time. The doors open at 8.15am and pupils are expected to be either at their places and ready to learn or ready to say the Morning Verse by 8.30am. Registration formally closes at 9.00am. After 8.30am, your child is considered Late and you MUST sign them in at Reception.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.30am** and will be kept open until **8.40am** the register for the second session will be taken at **2.05pm**.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Should your child be unwell and unable to attend or is running late, parents MUST email the school on absence@stpaulsstienerschool.org by 8.30am with the reason, date and name. Each day the child is ill requires a new email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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

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

4.3 Planned absence

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

Inform the school by emailing absence@stpaulsstienerschool.org

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

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (between 8.40 and 09:00) using the appropriate code (L).
- A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent (after 09:00) using the appropriate code (U).
- Where there are concerns about punctuality, the Class Teacher will make contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team will make contact.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason by first sending a text. This will then be followed by a phone call or email.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Kindergarten attendance will be reported to parents annually. Classes I – VIII will be reported to parents on a termly basis. Should a child's attendance be of concern, the Class Teacher will contact the parents.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Children's absence will be monitored on a weekly basis by the class teacher. The registers will be monitored by the Admin manager who will provide data to the Headteacher on a half termly basis. If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a child's absence continues to rise, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss ways of improvement.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. In circumstances where the absence rate continues to concern we will seek guidance from Access and Engagement services at our Local Authority (Islington).

In the event of high levels of absenteeism which is considered to be 80% or lower, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances, a decision may be taken by the school that we cannot ensure that we can appropriately educate the pupil, who will then be removed from the school roll.

5.3 Legal sanctions

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

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

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

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

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will promote good attendance by supporting parents by conveying that absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.

Class Teachers, the Monitoring Team and Headteacher and analyse attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues.

Deliver intervention in a targeted way, in response to data or intelligence.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Class Teacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis in conjunction with the Admin Team.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to email the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parent/carer is expected to email the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the Class teacher will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this and may require

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer from the Local Authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The school collects and stores attendance data in a paper register and on our Management Information System (MIS) SIMS. We use this data to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. School Refusers

In the event of a child becoming a school refuser, the SENCO and the teacher will work with the Parent/Carer to assess the child and ascertain the best strategies for getting the child back into school. At the end of a period of one half term, a formal assessment meeting will be held with the parents (and child if appropriate) to assess the situation and determine an action plan with clear review periods.

In most cases a maximum period of one term will be given to try to resolve the situation, failing which the child may be taken off the school roll.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Administration Manager. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher and Trustee board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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

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

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