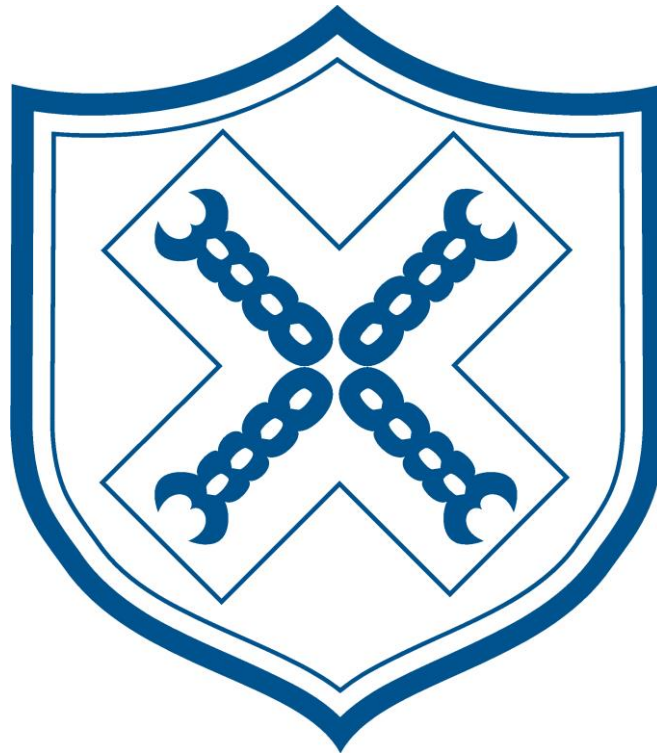




ST. LEONARD'S C OF E (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was formally adopted by the Governing body, to be reviewed annually.

Reviewed in September 2025 by Kirsty Cullen

Next review date September 2026

Headteacher: **Kirsty Cullen**

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Introduction

At St Leonard's C of E (A) Primary School, we are committed to ensuring all pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Excellent attendance is fundamental to pupils' wellbeing, safeguarding and academic success.

Statutory Framework

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (August 2024). The school has a duty to have regard to this guidance alongside relevant legislation, including the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Principles

- This policy underpins all other policies relating to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying and support for children with medical needs.
- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- Attendance is a shared responsibility between school, parents and external agencies. The school adopts a support-first approach, working proactively with families to remove barriers to attendance.

Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs Kirsty Cullen (Headteacher), who leads the strategic approach to improving attendance and ensuring statutory compliance.

Registers and Data

The school maintains electronic admission and attendance registers in line with statutory requirements, using national attendance codes. Registers are completed twice daily and retained in line with legal requirements. Attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and Department for Education where required.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust (enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this, particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person if their child is absent from school by 8.40am on the date of the absence. The reason for this is so that we are aware at registration who should have arrived at school to ensure that no children have gone missing on their way to school.

If possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible, it is expected that pupils will only miss part of the day.

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Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding priority. Unexplained absence is followed up promptly to ensure pupil safety.

Leave of absence

School is unable to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and a holiday under any circumstances would not be considered exceptional. Requests for leave must be made in advance, as absences cannot be authorised after they have been taken. Parents wishing to request leave need to complete a 'Request for Leave' form (attached) and submit this to the headteacher who will write back to specify whether the leave has been approved or declined.

Response to absence

If any child has not been registered, or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact the parent carer by text message on the first morning.

If the child is absent for more than one day, it is assumed that parents will continue to make contact on every morning of the absence.

The Local Authority will be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission. School will also take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

Early Intervention

Attendance is monitored closely. Early intervention includes communication with families, support plans and multi-agency working where appropriate.

Punctuality and late arrival

The school gates open at 8:40am and close promptly at 8:50am. Pupils are expected to arrive within this time window to ensure a calm and settled start to the school day. Any pupil arriving after this time when the registers have been closed will be required to sign in as late at the school office.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed in line with the school's attendance procedures, as it can have a significant impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing. Penalty notices may be issued for pupils who are persistently late.

Persistent absence (attendance below 90%)

Pupils with attendance below 90% are identified as persistently absent and will receive targeted support.

During each half term, the headteacher will send out an Attendance Monitoring Letter to all children whose attendance is below 90%.

It is hoped that parents would contact school at an early stage to work with the staff in resolving any problems regarding poor attendance together. This will generally be successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved, the school may refer the child via the Local Support Team to the Education Welfare Worker.

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He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or issue penalty fines.

Penalty Notices

In line with the national framework, a penalty notice may be issued when there are 20 or more unauthorised sessions (10 school days but not necessarily consecutive) within a rolling 10-week period. Fines are £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Repeat offences may lead to prosecution.

A penalty notice can be considered for persistent late arrival after the register closes where there are at least 20 sessions of late arrival in the current and previous term. These late arrivals do not have to be consecutive.

Staffordshire county council administer the penalty notices.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors to ensure high standards and identify trends.

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through information, flyers and newsletters. The registers are analysed regularly to allow attendance to be monitored and absences checked. This enables the head teacher to ensure that attendance meets the school target of 96%.

Promoting and Encouraging Attendance

The importance of good attendance is regularly promoted on the school newsletter.

We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers or the school nurse in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and governors and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. We believe that regular attendance is crucial to the progress, wellbeing and achievement of our pupils, so school staff are committed to working with parents to ensure that the level of attendance is as high as possible.