



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 2024 by Kirsty Cullen

Next review date September 2025

Headteacher: **Kirsty Cullen**

Growing in faith and learning

Introduction

The governors, head teacher and staff of St Leonard's Primary School are keen to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible.

We want to promote the view that regular attendance is vital to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children.

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.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality in order to raise achievement and enable pupils to maximise learning opportunities both in school and in later life.

Procedures

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parent and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, their absence should never be covered up nor should the school give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make the situation worse.

Admissions Register

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
Have been permanently excluded.

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.

Growing in faith and learning

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 9am 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.

Leave of absence

Following the Education Regulations 2013 (amendment) school is unable to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

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.

Punctuality

The school gates are opened at 8:40am and children can arrive between 8:40 and 8:50 at which point the school gates are closed. Any pupil arriving after this time will be classed as late. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 8:50am when the registers close. All children arriving after the register has closed must report to the office and names are recorded onto the late arrivals sheet.

Persistent absence (attendance below 90%)

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. 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

A combined total of 20 missed sessions (10 school days but not necessarily consecutive) during the current and previous term may trigger a penalty notice.

Growing in faith and learning

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.

From August 2024 and in line with national directives, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. 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

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 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.