

Attendance policy

St Piers School



St Piers
School

Approved by: Simone Hopkins

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 🌟 Promoting good attendance
- 🌟 Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- 🌟 Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- 🌟 Acting early to address patterns of absence
- 🌟 Building strong relationships with families/carers to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- ✿ Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- ✿ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- ✿ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- ✿ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- ✿ Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- ✿ Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The headteacher is responsible for:

- ✿ Implementation of this policy at the school
- ✿ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- ✿ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- ✿ Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies and leasing with local authority education welfare officers
- ✿ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- ✿ Leading attendance across the school
- ✿ Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- ✿ Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- ✿ Having an oversight of data analysis
- ✿ Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- ✿ Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- ✿ Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Danny Hulme and can be contacted via telephone on 01342 832243 or via email at dhulme@stpiers.org.uk

3.4 The School Office will...

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- ✿ Receive phone calls for student absence from 8.15-9.00 each morning
- ✿ Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- ✚ Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- ✚ Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- ✚ Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- ✚ Advising the Head of School (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class Teachers

- ✚ Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on Databridge on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 10am in the morning and again at 2pm in the afternoon.
- ✚ Transfer calls from parents to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, Danny Hulme, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ✚ Make sure their child attends school every day and on time
- ✚ Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- ✚ Notify transport that they will not need to collect their child if they are unwell, giving enough time to cancel the journey
- ✚ Provide the school with 3 emergency contact number for their child
- ✚ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Arrive to school on time, every day, Monday to Friday, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed

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, including educational, day visits organised by the school **(AM /) (PM \)**
- ✚ Late to school, 9.15- 10am or 2pm **(L)**
- ✚ Late after register closed, after 10am **or** 2pm **(U)**
- ✚ Authorised absence **(C)**
- ✚ Illness, not medical or dental **(I)**
- ✚ Medical/Dental appointments **(M)**
- ✚ Unauthorised absence **(O)**
- ✚ Authorised holiday **(H)**
- ✚ Unauthorised holiday **(G)**
- ✚ Excluded **(E)**

✿ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Y) ✿

Planned school closure (#)

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 also record:

- ✿ Whether the absence is authorised or not
- ✿ What medical appointments are for with the support of parents
- ✿ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.15 on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 9.45 and will be kept open until 10.00. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13.40 and will be kept open until 14.00.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 6).

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.

We ask parents to provide an overview of any medical or dental appointments by completing the medical appointments form and returning this back to school. This will allow the school to share relevant information with the nursing team to ensure any new medical needs our students have can be factored in, and relevant adjustments made, where appropriate (see Appendix 2).

We do encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible, but we do understand the complex medical natures of many of our students and that this is not always possible.

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:

- ✿ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- ✿ After the register has closed will be marked as late after register closed, using the appropriate code
- ✿ If a student is late 5 times without explanation and authorisation, school leadership will arrange a meeting with the family/residential carers to discuss how we can support the student's attendance
- ✿ If lateness continues, a formal letter raising concerns will be sent to the family/residential carers to raise our concerns. This will also be reported through school safeguarding and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other relevant external agencies may be informed and asked for advice

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

- ✿ Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
 - ✿ Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will call relevant social workers or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), CSPA and other relevant external agencies to seek advice. If no further information can be ascertained, the school may need to contact the police and raise the absence with the safeguarding team.
 - ✿ Identify whether the absence is approved or not
 - ✿ Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
 - ✿ Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
 - ✿ The school will follow the following procedure to ensure unexplained absences are followed up in line with guidance

Day 1 of unexplained absence

- ✿ School office or leadership team will try to contact (via phone call, email, text) to ascertain where the student is. If initial contact is not successful, school will attempt to contact other contacts provided for the student.
- ✿ School will continue to follow up regularly throughout the day to ascertain the student's whereabouts, including calling after school has finished
- ✿ The unexplained absence will be raised through school safeguarding and the student's social worker (if applicable) will be informed of the absence

Day 2 of unexplained absence

- ✿ School leadership will contact appropriate external services to report the absence (CSPA / EWO etc.)
- ✿ As above with additional updates to safeguarding

Day 3 of unexplained absence

- ✿ As above with additional updates of safeguarding
- ✿ External agencies to be notified and informed
- ✿ Inform the police to request a welfare check

Day 5 of unexplained absence

- ✿ As above with additional updates of safeguarding
- ✿ Contact and inform the local police again to further request welfare checks to be carried out

4.6 Following up persistent absence

First Day Absence

Parents/carers must give a written or verbal explanation, by ringing the school office. If no explanation is received by 9.15am school staff will contact the parent.

Second Day Absence

If no explanation has been received a standard letter will be sent home and parents are expected to ring school that day with an explanation. Social Care will be notified if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days for a student who is on a Child Protection Plan.

Frequent Absence

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. School leadership may liaise with Children's Services at the Local Authority to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance are identified. Where incidents of poor attendance are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

Student attendance is reported to parents at annual reviews and in the end of year school report. For LAC students, attendance is communicated termly at PEP meetings

Attendance data will also be shared with parents/carers as well as social workers if school have a reason to be concerned regarding attendance or punctuality.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the head of school's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. This will be decided on an individual basis, taking into account the complex needs of each child or young person.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and will make a decision based on what is provided.

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
- ✿ Flexi-schooling requests based on medical grounds
- ✿ In some circumstances, family holidays may be authorised if it is felt this is in the best interest of the student and considering any additional needs that may make family holidays challenging during school breaks. If this is authorised, funding authorities will need to be contacted and notified to inform them of the agreement.

5.2 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.

St Piers school retains the right to fine parents/carers where appropriate and will seek advice from the EWO with regards to this.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Executive Principal, 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. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored by the school office and the lead for attendance, Danny Hulme. Attendance data is reviewed half termly and a report is provided to governors. Any concerns with regards to low attendance will be flagged and strategies to support with improving attendance will be put in place.

At times where attendance is noticed to have dropped, the attendance lead will contact parents to ascertain why attendance is low and to offer support in getting children and young people back into school.

The half termly report compares attendance by gender, ethnicity, LAC status and placement (residential or day) to ascertain if there are certain groups which struggle more in maintaining good attendance and to highlight any barriers they may face so support can be focussed and individual to each student and their families.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- ✦ Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- ✦ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each half term and is gathered via our census returns. As a nonmaintained school, are not obliged to send any attendance data to DFE but this would be available upon request.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will

- ✦ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- ✦ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- ✦ Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- ✿ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 15% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- ✿ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- ✿ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school ✿
Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by Danny Hulme, Attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. 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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
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
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Medical appointment communication sheet

Medical Appointment Communication Sheet

Message to the parent/carer:

Please take this sheet to your appointment so that the medical professional can communicate any actions to the medical team at St Piers enabling any urgent changes to be made ahead of the clinic letter being received.

Message to the medical professional:

To ensure continuity of care please complete this form

Date

Today I have seen
(Insert Patient Name)

Date of Birth

NHS Number

I have made the following recommendation(s) :

.....
.....
.....
.....

Have you made any changes to medication? Yes/No (Please delete as appropriate) If 'Yes' please complete the box below

<p>The following changes to Medication</p> <p><i>(please indicate if this is to start immediately or whether it is a planned change to be implemented on receipt of the clinic letter)</i></p>	
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Signature of Medical Professional.....

Printed Name/Designation

Thank you for your cooperation.

Version table			
Creation:- Danny Hulme			
Approved by:- Jeremy Law			
<u>Version No.</u>	<u>Date of changes</u>	<u>Reason for change</u>	<u>Changes made by</u>
2	14/11/23	Updating school hours and revision of policy	GBE