

Attendance and Children Missing Education Policy and Procedure v2

St Piers School

The attendance policy at St Piers School has several key aims centred around the importance of school attendance and punctuality. The policy is committed to promoting good attendance as a whole-school value and ethos. A significant aim is to reduce absence. This policy strives to ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. Furthermore, it aims to act early to address patterns of absence and to build strong relationships with families/carers to provide the necessary support for pupils to attend school. St Piers also aims to promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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1. Aims

St Piers School is committed to meeting its obligations with regards to school attendance through its 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

The School will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy and procedure 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 [Parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK](#). 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 and procedure also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

"Suitable education" means efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age. Children Missing from Education should not be confused with:

- Children who are on roll at a school but are not in regular attendance. In this case, referrals should be made to the Education Welfare Service, or the school's Attendance and Welfare Officer;

- Children who are receiving Home Education (known as Elective Home Education);
- Children whose parents have applied for a school place, and the application is being dealt with via the Admissions procedures.

It is important that Young Epilepsy works closely with other agencies such as Local Authorities to ensure that the dangers of children becoming missing from education are reduced, as these children are at much greater risk of significant harm and are particularly vulnerable. The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately.

Why Children are Missing from Education?

There are many explanations behind CME. The following provides a list of potential triggers of CME and circumstances that may make a child more likely to be affected by these factors:

- Moving in and out of boroughs/areas and beginning the school application process.
- Failure of schools to notify the Local Authority of a child being off-rolled or being excluded.
- Withdrawal of a child from school by the parent/ carer.
- Failure to transition between schools.
- Disengagement.
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuge/ temporary accommodation.
- Youth Offending Service involvement.
- Generational disengagement.
- Children of immigrant families.
- Asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors (Looked After Children).
- Young carers.
- Children who are Privately Fostered or are known to Children's Social Care (e.g., Child Protection Plan, Child in Need)
- Trafficked children.
- Children who have experienced domestic abuse and other adverse family circumstances.
- Ceasing to attend due to withdrawal from provision by parents and schools (e.g. parents no confidence in school, behaviour and truancy issues, fresh start).

- Are on the point of permanent exclusion from school and they leave or are persuaded to seek a fresh start in another school.
- Are permanently excluded from schools out of the borough, particularly independent schools.
- Are on alternative curriculum arrangements which are not monitored effectively.
- Are made homeless due to social or economic issues including domestic violence.
- Members of the Traveller or Gypsy community who move around frequently.
- Families with poor literacy skills or with English as an Additional Language needs that find accessing information difficult.
- Have health needs or are disabled.
- Families who live in poverty.
- Dependency on substances (alcohol and drugs).
- Are let down by system failures between partners where information is not shared effectively to support the child.
- “Dip in and out” of elective home education at the request of parent/carers;
- Have parents who take extended leave/holiday and schools take them off roll or families leave the UK or borough for a period.
- Are bullied in and around schools and difficulties cannot be resolved in school.
- Children that are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Children that are trafficked

St Piers School take children missing education seriously and if any of the reasons above become applicable to any of its students, the School will follow appropriate procedures and work with the student's Local Authority to ensure support is in place to support the student back to School.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Education Governing Body (EGB)

The Education Governing Body 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 Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy within the School
- Monitoring School-level absence data and regularly reporting on it to Governors
- Supporting staff to monitor the attendance of all pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies and liaising with Local Authority Education Welfare Officers
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Assistant Head of School is the Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Assistant Head of School is responsible for:

- Leading on attendance across the whole School
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of attendance 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 their families
- Providing regular attendance reports to School staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader for Attendance and the Head of School
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School (authorised by the Executive Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notice

The Assistant Head of School 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 Administrator is responsible for:

- Receiving 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

3.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on Databridge on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see appendix 1), and submitting this information to the School Office by 10am in the morning and again at 2pm in the afternoon.
- Transferring calls from parents to the Assistant Head of School 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 Office 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 their transport provider 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 numbers for their child, when the child joins the School
- 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

The School will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

The School will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each School day and again at the beginning of the afternoon session. The attendance register will use codes set out by the DfE (Appendix 1)

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.

The School 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

St Piers School will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made and entries on the School's Management Information System (MIS) will be retained in line with the Young Epilepsy Retention Schedules.

Pupils must arrive in School by 9.30 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/carers 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).

An absence will be marked as due to illness and '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/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. Medical evidence will not be asked for 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

Parents/carers are encouraged 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.

Attending such 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.

Parents are asked 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).

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, the School Leadership team will arrange a meeting with the family/residential carers to discuss how the student's attendance can be supported.
- If lateness continues, a formal letter raising concerns will be sent to the family/ carers to raise the School's concerns. This will also be reported through School Safeguarding, the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other relevant external agencies who 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 inform and seek advice. If no further information can be ascertained, the School may need to contact the police and raise the absence with Young Epilepsy's 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

- The Assistant Head of School 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 the other emergency 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 day has finished
- The unexplained absence will be raised through School Safeguarding process 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 to 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 to Safeguarding
- Contact and inform the local police again to further request welfare checks to be carried out

4.6 Following up persistent absence

Persistence absence is where a student misses 10% of school or more and severe absence is where a student misses 50% more of school.

First Day Absence

Parents/carers must give a written or verbal explanation, by ringing the School Office. If no explanation is received by 9.30am School staff will try to contact the parent/emergency contacts.

Second Day Absence

If no explanation has been received a standard letter will be sent home and parents/carers 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 parents/carers. The 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 the 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 Looked After Children students, attendance is communicated termly at Personal Education Plans (PEP) meetings

Attendance data will also be shared with parents/carers, as well as Social Workers, if the School has 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, and will include 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 student.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence. The Head of School 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
- 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, the student's 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 student's EWO with regards to this.

Penalty notices can be issued by the 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 Assistant Head of School.

Attendance data is reviewed termly by the School Leadership team and a report by the Head of School is provided to each meeting of the Education Governing Body. 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 Designated Leader for Attendance will contact parents/carers to ascertain why attendance is low and to offer support in getting pupils back into School.

The 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 term and is gathered via our census returns. As a non-maintained School, St Piers is 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/carers
- 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/carers 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 Assistant Head of School. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Education Governing Body.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and Safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

This Procedure is agreed by the Executive Principal and will be implemented by St Piers School.



Signed:

Date: February 25

Simone Hopkins
Executive Principal

Date of next review: February 27

Version table

Date of creation: September 23

Approved by: Jeremy Law

Version no.	Date of changes	Reasons for change	Changes made by
1	September 2024	Updates to policy and appendices	Danny Hulme
2	February 2025	Reformatting of policy and signature box added	Julie Landsborough
	11/03/25	Wording tidied	Policy Review Group and the Head of School

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances

Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause



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

The following changes to Medication

(please indicate if this is to start immediately or whether it is a planned change to be implemented on receipt of the clinic letter)

Signature of Medical Professional.....

Printed Name/Designation

Thank you for your cooperation.

