



St Wystan's School

Attendance Policy

Policy Written: 02.12.24

Review date: 01.12.26

School Attendance

This policy is written with due regard of the DfE guidance [Working together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024](#).

Going to school regularly is important to a child's future. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in their academic journey. The School consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance, sets high expectations for every pupil and communicates those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents. The School's leaders systematically analyse its attendance data to identify patterns and target improvement. Where appropriate, the School will work with local agencies and partners to overcome barriers to attendance.

The School's Senior Leaders responsible for attendance are Natasha Lomas, Operations Manager, and Catherine Ralph, Deputy Headteacher.

The School's Objectives to Ensure High Attendance

To maintain a whole-School culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance, the School sets out to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them;
- Develop and maintain a whole School culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence;
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place;
- Share information and work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners, where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe;
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from School due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent

to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at our School, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends our School regularly. This means their child must attend every day that our School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from St Wystan's.

Once a child is registered at a school, parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly.

Absence

Authorised Absence

If a child is ill or unable to attend School for some reason, parents should contact School by phone, email or use ParentHub to notify the School. Depending on the reasons for absence, the Head will decide whether the absence can be authorised or not. Where absence is sickness related, we may require medical certification, particularly where the absence lasts a few days.

For all planned absences, an absence request form must be filled out. These are available from the School Office.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence from School is likely to be recorded as unauthorised absence when:

- there is no parental explanation;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation for an absence.

Heads are no longer permitted to agree a Leave of Absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. This includes where parents decide to take their children out of School for a family holiday during term time. If parents intend to take their child out of School for a leave of absence during term time, they must have requested this in advance and had their request agreed by the Head.

Repeated Absence

Schools have to regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from School, have irregular attendance, or where absence escalates and pupils miss 15 days, consecutively or non-consecutively, of School.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate absences.

Support from School

School is the first place to go to discuss any attendance problems. If a child starts missing School, there may be a problem that parents/carers are not aware of. Parents/carers are advised to talk to their child first, then approach his or her teacher or form tutor.

The School should try to agree a plan with you to improve the child's attendance. If the plan is not followed and things don't improve, the School will take further action.

Children who are absent from or Missing Education

The DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education' (2016) defines a child missing in education as a child of compulsory school age, who is not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise.

KCSIE expands the consideration to children who are absent from education. Children who are absent from or missing education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions are at significant risk of underachieving. This can also be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. The guidance sets out the School’s obligations to identify and report children who are missing in education. The School must report to its local authority all pupils of compulsory school age who are added to the admissions register and all pupils who are removed from the register, if they leave the School, other than at standard transition points (i.e. at all times except the end of the final year of education normally provided by the School). Where a pupil lives in a local authority, which is different from the location of the School, the School’s reporting responsibility is to the local authority in which the School is situated. In accordance with its safeguarding duties, as set out in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, the School recognises children missing in education as a potential safeguarding issue and follows its safeguarding procedures, as set out in its safeguarding policy. The School has a duty to make reasonable enquiries, as to the whereabouts of a child who is missing, in conjunction with its local authority, and cannot remove a missing child from its admissions register until it has agreed with the local authority that all reasonable endeavours to locate the child have been exhausted.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and, therefore, our School’s attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as for any other pupil. Working with their parents to improve attendance, our School is mindful of the barriers these pupils face and puts additional support in place, where necessary, to help them access their full-time education. This may include:

- Having sensible conversations, providing support and making reasonable adjustments;
- Working with parents and families to develop specific routines and approaches to attendance;
- Ensuring strategies to remove any in-school barriers to attendance, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in School and lunchtime arrangements;
- Ensuring good pastoral care is provided to support those with anxiety about attendance;
- Ensuring that data is regularly monitored by the School’s leaders.

Owner	Catherine Ralph		
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Governing Body Approval			
Website/App	Yes	ISI	No
Staff Handbook	No	Parent Handbook	Yes

