



Attendance Policy

St Thomas Church of England Academy

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Mission Statement

All Saints Multi Academy Trust Birmingham
God's Love in Action

Our children are at the heart of everything we do through **Christian values and relationships**. **Living and learning together** we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of **self-belief, mutual respect and belonging** through Social Emotional Learning and academic excellence. We are dedicated to building the foundations for **happy and successful life-long learning**.

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 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 local academy board

The Local Academy 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 Executive Headteacher

The EHT 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.
- 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 Charlotte Ward Lewis and can be contacted via 0121 622 2151 or c.wardlewis@allsaintsmat.school.

3.4 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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 Executive Headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising (authorised by the Executive Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Sam Cheema and can be contacted via 0121 622 2151 or s.cheema@allsaintsmat.school.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office before 9.05am.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance/Pastoral Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents / carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and to contact the office if any changes to the contact details ASAP.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day, if through the school day to provide evidence for the appointment.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Be prepared and ready for registration.

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 also at the start the second session, after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present or absent.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- 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 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

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 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff on 0121 622 2151 (see also section 7). The office staff will then inform the class teacher and update Arbor.

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 if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents will be asked to read and complete a leave of absence form available from the main office. The Attendance Officer will liaise with the Designated Senior Leader and a decision will be made as to whether the absence will be authorised. The office staff will liaise with the parent regarding the decision.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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 absent, using the appropriate code.

If a child is late, the school gate has been locked but the registers are still open, they must come into school through the main office where a member of the office staff will make a note of their name and their year group. This will be recorded so that consistent lateness can be monitored.

If a child is late and the register is closed the parent/carer (if accompanied) or the office staff will be asked to fill in a short form (Punctuality Form) explaining why their child is late. These will be kept and monitored by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor, if a child is late three times over a short period of time, a punctuality letter will be sent to the parent.

If a child is consistently late the parents will be asked to meet with the Attendance Manager who will explain the importance of getting to school on time and support where possible. If the late arrival continues the parents will be issued with a letter and asked to attend a meeting with a senior member of staff. Specific strategies will be put into place according to need.

4.5 Following up unexplained absences

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 may conduct a home visit. If the family cannot be reached then the school will contact either the police or social care, depending on the circumstances of the family.
- 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.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents / carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through text message and half termly attendance reports. These will be issued through Arbor.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Executive Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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.
- When a family needs time to spend together to support each other during or after a crisis.

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether 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. Strategies for promoting attendance

Celebrating attendance is shown through class assemblies and Class Dojo points are rewarded to encourage good attendance. These points can be viewed by parents through the Dojo App.

7. Attendance monitoring

- Attendance and absence are monitored daily by the school office and the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer analyses the data on a weekly basis and identifies pupils/families that may need additional support.

- Cohort data is monitored and analysed half termly by the Attendance Officer and the Designated Senior Lead for Attendance. They look at any historic and emerging patterns and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns. These interventions are carefully evaluated for impact.
- Attendance data at cohort level is presented to governors at each Local Academy Board meeting, along with any strategies currently employed to manage specific attendance.

7.1 Reducing persistent or severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% 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 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.

Specific strategies to be used:

- Text to be sent to the parent of any child who is below the national average.
- Informal meeting between parents and the Pastoral Manager/Attendance Officer.
- Letter from the Pastoral Manager/Attendance Officer to be sent outlining the importance of good attendance.
- Formal letter requesting a meeting with the Attendance Officer and the Designated Senior Lead for Attendance.
- School Attendance Review Meeting.
- Legal action will be taken in extreme cases.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Designated Senior Lead for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day