

St Luke's C.E. Primary School
Attendance Policy

Policy for Attendance
Full Governing Body
Reviewed Summer 2025
For Review: Spring 2028

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and for establishing a positive working ethos early in life. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. Absences not only impact the quality of teaching for the entire class but also place a strain on teachers, who must dedicate extra time to help pupils catch up and fill in the gaps upon their return. We also understand that poor punctuality, poor attendance or patterns of poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding issues. We take the issue of poor punctuality and attendance very seriously and put a number of measures in place to support parents and families.

Why does Attendance Matter?

The Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure their child receives an efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence, have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on a child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents together with school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. In essence, there are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.

Reporting Absences

100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of a child being away from school, it is parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for the child's absence as soon as possible. Parents are expected to contact the school either by email or by telephone on the first day of absence and to provide information as may be required. Where a child is ill the school should be notified of the nature of the illness and, when this can be predicted, the date the child is expected to be able to resume his or her studies.

Where irregular attendance of a registered pupil is causing concern, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified and the LA may apply to the courts for an education supervision order and where necessary parents may be prosecuted.

Lateness

Pupils arriving late may seriously disrupt not only their continuity of learning but also that of others. Registers will be kept open for a period of 30 minutes after the register is taken at 8:50am. Where pupils miss registration altogether and fail to provide an adequate explanation they will be marked as **unauthorised absent even** though they may arrive later. Where a pupil does arrive late they must report to the School Secretary who will note their attendance. If a child is genuinely unavoidably late because of difficulties at home or other circumstances the classteacher or Headteacher must be informed in writing. A record of pupils who are late is given to the Headteacher each Friday. The school's EWO visits the school on a regular basis to check the registers for lateness and absence of children. If regular lateness or absence is noted, the EWO after consulting with the Headteacher will take appropriate action.

Procedure for absent/late children

The register is checked by 9.30am each morning. Messages from the absent line are noted. Parents of children with no reason for absence will be contacted by phone. If no reply by 9.30am then the emergency contact numbers provided by the parent will be contacted. If no response by 10.00am then the EWO is contacted.

Children who arrive late, after 8.50am, are registered in the late book. Reason for their lateness is recorded on our Management Information System (MIS) and appears on their school reports. Reports are run from our MIS each half term and any children with persistent late marks or absences are highlighted and passed on to the headteacher.

The Headteacher monitors, contacts parents if there are concerns or a pattern is emerging. If attendance goes below 90% the EWO is contacted.

Reasons for Absences

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned as an authorised absence and the Headteacher would need to be notified in writing in advance of the circumstances in order to authorise the absence. Parents should always use the online absence form on the school website to request approval for any planned future absences. Once the form is submitted, parents will receive a response indicating whether the absence has been authorised.

Family Bereavements

The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. The Headteacher must be notified and will treat any request for absence sympathetically.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave

In accordance with DfE advice, the Headteacher will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. When deemed appropriate the case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service for legal action, including prosecution. Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 10 consecutive sessions (five days) or more, not authorised by the headteacher, may be at risk of a penalty notice. The school refers cases to the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). (More information is included in Appendix 1 & 2)

Days of Religious Observance

Section 444(3) (c) of the Education Act 1996 provides that an offence is not committed where the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age results from participation in a day set aside exclusively for

religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Such absences are classified as authorised absence. Parents should notify the school in advance of such an absence.

Summer 2025

Appendix 1:

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for unauthorised term-time holidays and delayed return from authorised extended holidays

From Monday 3rd November 2025 onwards, penalty notices will be issued for single event absences of at least five consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register. Where a headteacher does not authorise a request from a parent for an absence, they will respond with a valid warning to the parent about a potential penalty notice on the submitted absence request form. This decision is the headteacher's. This response will constitute a valid warning to the parent about a potential penalty notice. In all cases, a minimum of 10 sessions in total (five school days) of absence must have been accrued.

The school may also issue an FPN if a pupil fails to return on an agreed date following a leave of absence. In these circumstances, the headteacher should make clear to parents the date when the pupil will be expected to return to school, warning them that if they fail to return on that date, a penalty notice may be issued.

The school will consult with the allocated Education Welfare Officer before submitting a referral for FPN requests. In-line with the guidance issued by the Education Welfare Service, if the school is seeking issue of an FPN for term-time holidays, the request should be emailed to ews.fpn@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Each request must be accompanied by a completed FPN checklist for term-time holidays (shown below) as well as a registration certificate to cover the offence period, which must be signed and dated by the Headteacher. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The FPN service is not used by the school for any other persistent absence matters. These requests are sent through to the SPA as a persistent absence referral, at which point Educational Welfare Services will determine if it meets the threshold and/or whether it is appropriate to issue an FPN.

More information regarding fixed penalty notices can be found on Achieving for Children's webpage:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/education-and-education-services/school-attendance>

The policy of the school for FPNs will be reviewed at the same time as the attendance policy.

Appendix 2:

SCHOOL CHECKLIST FOR ISSUE OF FPNS FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE IN TERM TIME

When complete, please email to ews.fpn@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Schools to complete Section A only, EWS to complete Section B.

SECTION A- SCHOOL

<p>SCHOOL Please mark as YES or NO below - and add detail as appropriate</p>
<p>Does the school have the FPN process in their attendance policy for term time holiday? Has it made this information available to parents/carers?</p>
<p>Has this action been determined by the headteacher or EWO?</p>
<p>Have the Headteacher and EWO discussed the case and agreed that FPN is the best course of action?</p>
<p>Has the school provided an up-to-date registration certificate, signed by the headteacher? (Please attach attendance certificate, clearly showing absence marked as "G" code)</p>
<p>What reason did the parent/ carer give for requesting a term-time holiday? (Copy of request form to be enclosed)</p> <p>Did the headteacher send a letter informing the parent/ carer that the holiday was unauthorised and that a FPN might be issued? (If so, the letter sent to the parent/ carer must be attached).</p> <p>Were there any verbal communications with the parent/ carer?</p> <p>Has the school shown evidence that 10 consecutive sessions (five school days) have been accrued due to unauthorised term time leave, in any five week period?</p>
<p><i>*Penalty notices will be issued for single event absences of least 5 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.</i></p>
<p>Has the parent/carers requested a holiday previously?</p>

If so, was the holiday authorised?
Are there other attendance concerns?
<p>*Unauthorised delayed return from authorised extended holidays (the pupils fail to return on agreed date): <i>the headteacher should make clear to parents and carers the date of when the pupil will be expected to return to school, warning them that if they fail to return on the date the a penalty notice may be issued.</i></p>
Have all of the above been completed and sent by email to the named EWO?

Section B:
Has the EWO set out the actions taken to date on EHM?
Is the relevant paperwork completed and evidence available to support the actions? Is this saved on EHM ?
DETAILS OF YOUNG PERSON AND FAMILY
Name of Student/YP: Date of Birth:
Year group:
Attendance:
Attendance last year (if beginning of year i.e. prior to autumn half term):

Parent/ Carer 1: Full Name <u>(including first name)</u> of parent or carer and address:
Parent/Carer 1: Phone number and email address:
Parent/ Carer 2: Full Name <u>(including first name)</u> of parent or carer and address:
Parent/Carer 2: Phone number and email address:
<i>*A parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child, but who has parental responsibility for them, or who has care of the child.</i>
<i>* You must provide separate emails for each parent/carer.</i>

Name of school referrer

If this information is not provided by schools to support the FPN application then the FPN will NOT be processed. Attendance certificate must be attached and signed by the headteacher.