ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

NOVEMBER 2022

RESPECT YOURSELF

RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY,

RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY,

RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY,

BUT MOST OF ALL, RESPECT GOD OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

The Local Governing Committee of St Helen's Primary School adopted this Attendance policy in November 2022.

1. AIMS

We are committed to meeting our obligation for 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 good punctuality.

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 Governing Committee

The LGC 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 headteacher

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

3.3 All Senior leaders are responsible for attendance

Their responsibilities include:

> 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

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to the Local Governing Committee

> Liaises with our Attendance officer from Southend Attendance Team to arrange "late gates" where they monitor our late pupils on a number of occasions and speak to the adult dropping off the child/children.

> Liaising with our Attendance Officer to arrange attendance meetings with parents/carers where attendance rates of their child/children need to be improved.

Our Attendance Officer from Southend Attendance Team is Debbie Reynolds (01702) 212150 07827 981167 debbiereynolds@southend.gov.uk

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance electronically on Sims on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office before 9.15am for morning registration and before 1.45pm for afternoon registration.

3.5 Office Manager (supported by other office staff)

Office Manager will:

> Take calls (and check answerphone messages) from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
> Will follow up any absences not reported by calling the parents/carers.
> Inform Senior Leaders of any issues/updates on identified families when necessary.
> Provide data returns for the Attendance Team.
> Provide attendance reports for individual pupils, groups of pupils and across the whole school.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends school every day and on time.
> Contact the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Also to advise when they are expected to return.
> Provide the school with more than 1 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:

> Attend school every day on time unless they are too ill to attend.

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 1st thing in the morning and again at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present
> Attending an approved off-site educational activity
> Absent
> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If any errors are made when the register is initially completed, the office Manager can and will correct the error.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> For all pupils, 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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.15pm for EYFS and KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2. The registers will be kept open until 1.45pm for EYFS and KS1 and 2pm For KS2.

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 9.15am by texting or emailing the school office or leaving a message on our answerphone.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or where attendance is being monitored by the LA Attendance Team and the targets have not been met or where there is continued absence.

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.

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 by contacting the office by email, text or letter.

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

> Any ongoing punctuality issues will be initially followed up by Office Staff (phone call or text to parent/carer) and where necessary a meeting will be arranged with a Senior Leader.

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. The school will call all other emergency contacts if they cannot contact the parent/carer. If the child is vulnerable, the school might contact the Police or Social Services.

> Once contact has been made, the school will 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.

> 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 the Attendance Officer from the Southend Attendance Team.

> Report to the CME Team, if concerned about the whereabouts of a child.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at the end of each term.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Serious illness of grandparents who do not live locally
- Funerals, baptisms and weddings of immediate family – grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts and siblings

- Important family events where the family have limited control over the date such as graduations of siblings or parents.

Where any of the above events include long distance travel, a maximum of 5 days will be authorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request and the attendance levels of the child/children.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. This request needs to be put in writing or via school email addressed to the Headteacher. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments

> 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 this.

5.2 LEGAL SANCTIONS

St. Helen's do not currently issue fines but this issue can be revisited at any review of the policy.

6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Attendance and punctuality rates are monitored half-termly for rewards. Rewards include:

100% attendance for half a term	They will receive a sticker.
100% attendance for a whole term	They will receive a wristband.
100% attendance for the whole year (good punctuality is also expected)	They will receive a certificate, a gold badge and a reward from the PTFA – usually a voucher.

7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school

> Monitor individual pupil level attendance and absence data on a termly basis – this information will be shared with parents/carers.

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

> Monitor the attendance and absence data for pupil premium pupils on a weekly basis.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Committee.

7.2 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Office Manager will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to Senior Leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

The Senior Leaders will:

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

7.4 Reducing persistent and 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 (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

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as and when is necessary. At every review, the policy will be discussed and approved by the Local Governing Committee.

9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding 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