St. Andrew's C of E (VA) Primary School

Attendance Policy

October 2025

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Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Headteacher Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Carys Lewis	01752 201660 c.lewis@st-andrews.plymouth.sch.uk
School Attendance Senior Lead Deputy DSL Assistant Headteacher	Ian Pope	ian@st-andrews.plymouth.sch.uk
Deputy DSL Assistant Headteacher	Sarah Field	sarah@st-andrews.plymouth.sch.uk
Co Chair of Governors Co Chair of Governors	Ali Ryder Beth Williams	a.ryder@staps.org.uk beth@staps.org.uk
SEND & Family Support Advisor (FSA)	Cass Stephens	01752 201660

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Ian Pope, Assistant Headteacher & School Attendance Senior Lead.
- Parents/Carers should contact the Attendance Officer or FSA on a day-to-day basis about attendance concerns.
- Parents/Carers should contact the Attendance Officer for more detailed support on attendance.
- First Day calling arrangements including telephone number:

  We ask parents to call the school office on 01752 201660 to report their child's absence. Parents must inform the school by 8.55am on the day, **providing the reason for absence and when their child will be returning to school.**

  Should parents not inform the school, then they will be telephoned or emailed until school is assured that the child is safe and has a reason for the absence.

Part 1 Policy:

1. Introduction

It is the aim of St Andrew's CE (VA) Primary that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015' and 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.1 Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

100% attendance	0 days missed	Excellent: Gives your child the best chance of success
95% attendance	9 days of absence	Satisfactory
90% attendance	19 days (3 weeks and 4 days) of absence	Poor: Less chance of success and makes it harder to progress
85% attendance	28 days (5 weeks and 3 days) of absence)	Very concerning: This has serious implications on learning and progress
80% attendance	38 days (7 weeks and 3 days) of absence	Extremely concerning: Half a term missed
75% attendance	47 days (9 weeks and 2 days) absence	Extremely concerning: Almost one whole school term missed

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Working Together to Safeguard Children is the statutory guidance that sets out the legal expectations on all professionals that work with children. Low levels of school attendance can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. If we are worried about your child and have concerns about their welfare we will follow our school's safeguarding procedures and where necessary, seek support from other agencies.

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2022 Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. When communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance parental understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions, children with a social worker or those who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admissions register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admissions register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admissions register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

3. Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The **Headteacher** or **School Attendance Senior Lead** will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Gooseberry Lane and Citadel Road gates are open by 8:35am each morning
Our pupils must arrive by 8:40am on each school day.
Our morning register is taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 8:55am
Our afternoon register is taken between 1:00 – 1.15pm.
A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed at 8.55a.m will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after 9.15a.m they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late at school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

3.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2022[3] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

[3] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

We ask parents to notify the school office on 01752 201660 the reason for their child's absence. Parents can speak to a member of staff or leave a message. The school asks that parents notify the school before 8.55am, whenever possible. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

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Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or FSA for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

More information about EBSA and resources for support can be found here.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Parents who have concerns about their child's special educational needs and disabilities can contact our schools Special Educational Needs Coordinator for further information on the support available.

The Plymouth Local Offer provides children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, families and professionals, with information in one place, helping them to understand what services they can expect from a range of local agencies and schools.

Parents can access independent support and advice about SEND from the Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS).

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school

office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out on the school Inventry system. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out on the school Inventry system. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card, letter or email – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

3.5 Suspensions (aka Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the school Inventry system. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

First day response: if your child is absent from school with no explanation, a phone call will be made to the first emergency contact. If there is no response, a message will be left requesting contact with school. Following this the other emergency contacts may be contacted. If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may conduct a home visit or contact the police to request a welfare check.

Priority will be given to Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing or attendance is a concern.

Parents will be asked to supply details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

We will send "Attendance Improvement" letters to parents when appropriate.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible

safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

8. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See DfE 2020 School Attendance guidance.)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of a Parenting Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. Prior to requesting legal enforcement action, we will ensure that we have followed Plymouth City Council's procedures.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

11. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time

possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

12. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

Regular and punctual school attendance is both a legal requirement and essential in ensuring that all children maximise their educational opportunities and future life chances. Penalty notices are issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended. This empowers authorised officers of the Local Authority, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers if authorised by them) and the Police, (including community support officers and accredited persons) to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. From 19th August 2024, a new National Framework for Penalty Notices has been introduced following changes to secondary legislation. The aim of this is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. Persons authorised to issue Penalty Notices are referred to in this Code of Conduct as 'Authorised Person'. This code complies with relevant regulations and the Department for Education's national framework for penalty notices as set out in the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

Penalty notices must be issued in line with Plymouth City Council's Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice can be issued if there are 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

The Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Notice (Notice served by post is deemed to have been received on the second day after posting if it was delivered by first class post).

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must either prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies or withdraw the Notice.

2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there are a range of other legal interventions open to schools

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education Supervision Orders
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Plymouth City Council's Children Missing Education Procedures and make CME referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Hub if unsure about any individual cases: CME@Plymouth.gov.uk

14. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within [xx] school days, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts. Where we have been unable to establish the child's whereabouts we will conduct a home visit.

15. Reporting to Parents

Termly: At the end of the autumn and summer term, we directly inform all parents of their child's attendance figures up to that date via a written school report

Annually: At the end of each Summer Term, we directly inform all parents of their child's attendance figures up to that date included within their child's Annual Report.

Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

16. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Daily attendance is recorded on our school system. Any correspondence with you regarding school attendance will be recorded on a system called CPOMS. This will provide a contemporaneous case chronology for the pupil which provides details of conversations, communication, decisions, actions, support offered, impact of any support, referrals to outside agencies, meetings etc. This will be used as evidence by the local authority and inform decision making in respect of any legal enforcement action to be taken.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance of vulnerable groups of children will be identified during a regular attendance meeting held with school staff and our educational welfare officer. Where there is a concern the below will implemented:

• Follow-up action-plans for pupils with low attendance

• Timely liaison with home

• Referral to outside agencies

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Attendance Lead

The senior leader with responsibility for attendance will offer a clear vision for improving attendance. They will regularly meet with the trust educational welfare officer. During these meetings individual and group attendance will be reviewed, such as Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL). This is to establish whether any group is experiencing difficulty in attendance .

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Sometimes absence from school can be part of a safeguarding concern. If this is the case the DSL will be notified and if necessary, take advice from Plymouth children's services.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers might also make phone calls home when there is a change in attendance. They will also inform parents of attendance at parents evening and school reports.

Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Officer or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

19. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e., present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2 – Plymouth City Council Letter 1

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you know, your child XXXX has been absent for XXXX unauthorised sessions so far, this academic year. If there is anything we can do to support you, we are here. Please contact your child's class teacher or XXXX (Attendance Champion) or XXXXX (Family Support Worker) if you would like to have an informal conversation about your child.

For your information there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices published by the Department for Education.

1. Schools must consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10 weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absences and can be consecutive or non- consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. The fine has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, if unpaid it will increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a 2nd penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

We will be in touch again to offer a supportive meeting if this low attendance pattern continues. Please do contact us if there is anything we can do to help.

We recognise that some low attendance may be due to illness. The intention of this email/letter is to keep families informed of their child's unauthorised absences.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 3 – Plymouth City Council Letter 2

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you know, your child XXXX has missed a further XXXX unauthorised sessions since our previous email/letter. They have now been absent XXXX sessions so far, this academic year. If there is anything we can do to support you, we are here. Please contact XXXX (Attendance Champion) or XXXXX (Family Support Worker) if you would like to have an informal conversation about your child.

As we explained previously there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices published by the Department for Education.

1. Schools must consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10 weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absences and can be consecutive or non- consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. The fine has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, if unpaid it will increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a 2nd penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance. Please do contact us if there is anything we can do to help.

We recognise that some low attendance may be due to illness. The intention of this email/letter is to keep families informed of their child's authorised and unauthorised absences.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 4 – Plymouth City Council Letter 3

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

XXXX has missed a further XXXX unauthorised sessions of school this year. You can have a big impact in helping them attend and not miss any more learning. We would appreciate your help with XXXX's attendance, if you have any queries or require further information, please get in touch on 01752 XXXXXX. If we do not see an improvement in their attendance, we will be inviting you in for a School Attendance Meeting.

Just a further reminder that there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices published by the Department for Education.

1. Schools must consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10 weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absences and can be consecutive or non- consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. The fine has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, if unpaid it will increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a 2nd penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

Thank you for your continued support

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 4 – Plymouth City Council Late Letter

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear XXXX

As you know, your child XXXX has been late on XX days so far, this academic year. Being regularly late to school can mean that your child misses out on important learning which could affect their academic achievement. They also don't have the social time to settle into class and it can also be embarrassing arriving late to their classroom. If there is anything we can do to support you, we are here. Please contact your child's class teacher or XXXX (Attendance Champion) or XXXXX (Family Support Worker) if you would like to have an informal conversation about your child.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix 5 – Plymouth City Council Medical Letter

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear XXXX
Forename, Surname, year group
We are concerned about the number of medical absences your child has had from school; their education will have been negatively impacted by this.
If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition which keeps impacting on their ability to attend school fully, then please talk to us about this and we will consider developing an Individual Health Care Plan with you and any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education. We will look at each child individually where there are exceptional circumstances.
If you consider that there are other matters which impact on your child's ability to attend school regularly, then please contact either your child's class teacher, XXXX (Attendance Champion) or XXXX (Family support worker) who will listen and offer you support.

The NHS (National Health Service) provide guidance Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

From this point on, if your child is absent from school, we must be sure of the reason they cannot attend school. It is therefore important that you provide us with additional information or documentation to enable us to make an informed decision regarding authorisation for each absence. It is important that you provide this information or documentation as there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices published by the Department for Education for unauthorised school absence.

1. Schools must consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10 weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absences and can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. The fine has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, if unpaid it will increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a 2nd penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 6 – Plymouth City Council Improvement Letter

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear XXXX
Forename, Surname, year group
Percentage attendance

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to you, there has been a significant improvement in XXXX's attendance, I have enclosed a copy of their attendance certificate. We will continue to monitor XXX's attendance in line with our usual processes.

At XXXXX School, we believe that our community is stronger together, with all our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are aiming to provide a limitless education for your child through active, meaningful, and engaging opportunities. By attending school every day, we believe that we can achieve this success.

I thank you for your support in this important matter and the continued improvement in XXXX's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7 – EWO Referral

Education Welfare
Case Work Referral and Chronology

Child's details: **Date Referred:**

Name:	School:	Current Attendance:
DOB:	YG:	Date of Referral:
Address:		

EHCP	SEN	Health Need	CP	CIN

TAM	Lead Professional: Contact number:	EHAT	Lead Professional: Contact number:

If yes to any of the above, please provide details in the reason for referral section.

Parent/Carer details

Name:	Relationship to child:
Address: Postcode:	
Home number: Mobile number:	Email address:
Name:	Relationship to child:
Address: Postcode:	
Home number: Mobile number:	Email address:

	Date Sent	Attendance %	Copy attached √
Green Attendance Letter Sent			
Amber Attendance Letter Sent			
Red Attendance Letter Sent			
Reason for referral:			

Chronology

School Key Staff

Name	Designation	Email	Contact number

Any Other Agency Contact details

Name	Agency and Designation	Email	Contact number

Reason for referral & action taken by school so far

Referrer details :

Referred by:	Role	Date:	Signed:

Date	**%**	**Action**	**Recorded by**
	%		
	%		
	%		
	%		
	%		

Guidance Documents:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE May 2022)

Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities (DfE Updated August 2022)

Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2022)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

School census guidance and regulation

https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

Children Missing Education Procedures (Plymouth City Council November 2022)

https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/children-missing-education

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Plymouth City Council October 2021)

https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Final%20Code%20of%20conduct.pdf

Alternative Provision Guidance (Plymouth City Council September 2022)

https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/education-participation-and-skills-service-alternative-provision-guidance