

# **Attendance Policy**



## Document Control

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Document Reference:	ATLP Attendance Policy	
Version	01	
Status	Approved	
Updated	NA	
Related Policies	Behaviour Policy E-safety policy Acceptable Use Policy Safeguarding Policy Students with Additional Health Needs Policy Bring your own device agreement Device Loan Agreement GDPR Pupil Privacy Notice Risk Management Policy	
Relevant Legislation/Guidance	DfE: <a href="#">Working together to improve school attendance (2022 ) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>	
Review Date/Frequency	Biennial or upon legislative change. November 2024	
Approved/Ratified By	School Improvement Scrutiny Committee	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2022

## Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all students to enable fulfilment of their potential at Arthur Terry Learning Partnership schools.

## 1 Key principles

High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.

- It is the responsibility of students to attend school well.
- It is the responsibility of their families, local partners and staff to support improvements to attendance. Some students find it harder than others to attend school. The individual school will work with students, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- The ATLP and its schools aim for attendance above the national average. When attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this. Sanctions may be applied in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or students have should be discussed with the school's attendance lead. When more detailed support is required, parents and students should contact the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

## 2 Roles and responsibilities

The School

The School will:

- develop and maintain a whole-school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance.
- work with students and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions when appropriate.
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, when required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance.
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future.
- ensure that all students can access full-time education, putting strategies in place in the rare instances when this will not be possible.
- liaise with relevant individuals including DSLs and SENCOs to ensure that provisions are put in place to support vulnerable students to maintain their education and attendance, including when education is conducted through remote learning.
- ensure that the schools leadership team works in collaboration with the Trust Board to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy and provide the Trust Board with such information about the attendance and non-attendance of students as is required.
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in its policies and procedures, including the non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)*

- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection policy: St Michael's CE Primary School Safeguarding Policy)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their children's attendance and absence levels
- support students who are returning to education following long-term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system.
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader.
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement with ATLP schools.
- maintain the resources necessary to facilitate remote learning and arrange any additional training staff may require to support students where students are required to access their education via remote learning.
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance.pdf)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

## Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their children arrive at the school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment.
- promote the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their children from the school (see section 5 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences.
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their children's attendance.
- when periods of remote learning are required, ensure their children are supported to learn remotely at the times set out by their school, that the schoolwork set is completed on time and to the best of their children's ability, and that equipment and technology used for remote learning is used as intended.
- not take their children out of education for holidays during term time (see section 5 below)
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance.pdf).

## Students

We expect students to:

- attend school regularly and on time.
- be punctual to all lessons.
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).
- when periods of remote learning are required, ensure they are available to participate in remote learning at times set by their school and that schoolwork is completed on time and to the best of their ability, or notify a responsible adult where this may not be the case.

Designated attendance lead

The designated attendance lead ("DAL") at the School is the Headteacher

The DAL is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the school and will:

- Offer a clear vision for improving attendance expectations and processes.
- Oversee the analysis of attendance and absence data, identifying patterns and trends and ensuring that this information is used to improve attendance.
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and students.
- provide data and reports to support the work of the Trust Board (see below).

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- take an active role in improving attendance by recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the Trust and ATLP schools' ethos and policies.
- ensure that school leaders fulfil the Trust's expectations and their statutory duties.
- delegate the School Improvement Scrutiny Committee as responsible for the regular review of attendance data and commentary, discussion and challenge of trends, encouragement of schools to share identified best practice, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support students or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.

### **3 Registration**

The school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each student's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Students who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where students arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 4 applies.

The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance))

When a student attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, schools shall treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

### **4 Late arrival**

If a student arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended, he/she must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

A pupil who has 10 unauthorised late marks (not necessarily consecutive) over a period of 12 school weeks (excluding school holidays) may receive a penalty warning notice and a fine.

## 5 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

**Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.

**Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

### Reporting absence from the School

- Parents are asked to telephone school by 9am on the first day of absence, indicating the reasons and likely length of time of the absence. If this telephone call is not received, St Michael's CE Primary School has in place a system of first day calling. This means that parents will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early-stage pupils who do not have a good reason for the absence. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will email the parents. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents / carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, parents/cares may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

### Appointments

- Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a student should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- Where an appointment must take place during school time, the student should attend school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to school office.
- For the time absent from school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter may be asked for.

### Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

- Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.
- To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing, completing Appendix 2, addressed to the Head Teacher and, wherever possible, at least 2 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head Teacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
  - will be confirmed in writing.
  - is solely at the Head Teacher's discretion and
  - is final.

Where permission is granted, the Head Teacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and parents/carers proceed to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local

authority. If unauthorised leave is taken in term time and the children's absence is for 10 school sessions (5 days, not necessarily consecutive) or more the school will notify the LA Welfare Officer, who may issue a penalty notice. This may result in a fine being issued.

#### Religious observance

We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs,

the absence from the school will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the school by contacting the school office, in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## 6 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to students or groups of students who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the DAO, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders.
- identify students who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner.
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends and contribute analysis of identified trends to School Improvement Scrutiny Committee attendance reporting.
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national levels
- monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups of pupils.
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups.
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of students who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable.

The school's procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

When absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival.

- persistent truancy or lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.

In very exceptional circumstances, should a student's individual needs necessitate a temporary part-time timetable (e.g. where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education, and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package), formal arrangements including regular review and a time limit shall be made between the student, their parents and the school. Any request for a part-time timetable should be made to the Headteacher. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. A part-time timetable shall never be used to manage a student's behaviour.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.

When parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£60 if paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents.

When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644242/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

Where attendance has continued for a full term to fall short of expectations despite support and intervention methods, the school may seek legal recourse. These may include education supervision orders, parenting orders or attendance prosecution.

## 7 Remote Attendance

There may be short periods when the continuation of education may need be delivered remotely. These may include but are not limited to:

- occasions when school leaders decide that it is not possible for the school to open safely, or that opening would contradict guidance from local or central government.
- occasions when individual students, for a limited duration, are unable to physically attend their school but are able to continue learning, for example pupils with an infectious illness.

In these circumstances schools will take all reasonable steps to facilitate remote education as soon as reasonably practicable, in proportion to the length of absence and disruption to the affected student's learning. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that all students have access to the resources needed for effective remote learning. Lesson plans will be adapted to ensure that the curriculum remains fully accessible via remote learning, where practical – where this is not practical, the school will ensure students can catch up on these areas of the



curriculum when they return to school. Remote education in these instances may include recorded or live direct teaching, as well as time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently.

In instances where circumstances of individual students or the environment necessitate the provision of remote education, schools will endeavour to facilitate remote education equivalent in length to the core teaching students would receive in school;

- 3 hours a day on average across the cohort for key stage 1, with less for younger children
- 4 hours a day for key stage 2
- 5 hours a day for key stages 3 and 4

The school will keep parents and students informed of any changes to the remote learning arrangements or the schoolwork set.

Students' engagement with remote education will be recorded and monitored on the attendance register as code Y. Students who are unwell are not expected to engage in remote learning until they are well enough to do so.

For the purpose of providing remote learning, the school may make use of:

- work booklets
- email
- past and mock exam papers
- online learning portals
- educational websites
- reading tasks
- live webinars
- pre-recorded video or audio lessons

Any video conferencing shall take place only using ATLP approved software: Microsoft Teams, Zoom & Showbie.

The ATLP recognises that some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support. The individual school shall work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education when required. Teaching staff will liaise with the SENCO and other relevant members of staff to ensure that all students remain fully supported for the duration of the remote learning period.

The school will identify 'vulnerable' students (students who are deemed to be vulnerable or are at risk of harm) via risk assessment prior to the period of remote learning. The school will arrange for regular contact to be made with vulnerable students, prior to the period of remote learning. The DSL will arrange for regular contact with vulnerable students as deemed appropriate. All contact with vulnerable students will be recorded and suitably stored in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL will keep in contact with vulnerable students' social workers or other care professionals during the period of remote working, as required.

One-to-one sessions with video shall not normally be permitted. However, when this is required e.g. for younger students / primary school students and having sight of a student for safeguarding reasons, staff and students shall have regard for the provisions noted in the ATLP E-safety policy. One-to-one sessions shall be conducted during school hours, and from school premises unless authorised in exceptional circumstances by headteachers.

Students will be required to use their own or family-owned equipment to access remote learning resources, unless the school agrees to provide or loan equipment, e.g. laptops. Students and parents will be required to look after any equipment they use to access remote learning resources. If a student is provided with school-owned equipment, the student and their parent will sign and adhere to the Acceptable Use Agreement prior to commencing remote learning. Students not using devices or software as intended will be disciplined in line with the school Behavioural Policy.

The ATLP IT Team will ensure that all school-owned equipment and technology used for remote learning has suitable anti-virus software installed, can establish secure connections, can recover lost work, and allows for audio and visual material to be recorded or downloaded, where required.

The school will communicate to parents about any precautionary measures that need to be put in place if their child is learning remotely using their own/family-owned equipment and technology, e.g. ensuring that their internet connection is secure. ATLP's IT technicians are not responsible for providing technical support for equipment that is not owned by ATLP schools, however issues with remote learning or data protection must be communicated to the school as soon as possible so they can investigate and resolve the issue.

The school will not contribute to any household expenses incurred while students learn remotely, e.g. heating, lighting, council tax, paper or printing costs.

Students are accountable for the completion of their own schoolwork – teaching staff will only contact parents via email if there are any significant concerns about the quality of or completion of any work. Work that cannot be completed for genuine reasons will be completed when the student returns to school.

## Appendix 1 - Procedures for Managing Unexplained Absence

### Registration and Punctuality

For safeguarding purposes, a register is taken at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session. These two registers make up a pupil's overall attendance percentage.

#### Morning registration

Children may arrive at school between 8:40 and 8:50 am.

Morning registration takes place at 8:50am.

Pupils arriving after 8:50 am will be recorded as 'L' – *'You're late if you miss the gate.'*

Pupils arriving after 9am will be marked as unauthorised, 'U'. This is a present code but will be dealt with under our procedures for punctuality.

#### Afternoon registration

The register is taken at 1:10pm.

Pupils arriving after 1:10pm but before 1:20pm will be marked as late 'L'

Pupils arriving after 1:20pm will be marked as unauthorised, 'U'. (See above.)

### Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

Pupils' attendance and lateness is robustly monitored.

In the first instance we will try to support children and families who are facing significant personal circumstances, which may affect regular attendance and / or punctuality in the following ways:

- Supporting pupils through additional agreed strategies within school e.g. participating in a nurture group or having a named member of staff to speak with
- Arranging for parents / carers to meet with the school's Vulnerable Children's Lead
- Referring families for Tier 2 / 3 support

At all stages we want to work with parents / carers to support their child's attendance. The stages of support work as a guide only and different methods of support may be more suitable for some pupils.

#### Early Concern

If we notice inconsistent attendance, we will contact you by phone.

**Where attendance is 90% or below it is classed as PERSISTENT and is a high priority concern.**

At this stage we may ask you to work with school, drawing on the resources developed by Staffordshire's Educational Psychology Team for children showing signs of ***Emotionally Based School Avoidance***. These are most appropriate for children where there are barriers related to anxiety, challenging emotions and thoughts and self-care.

If there is no improvement in attendance over the following two weeks, parents will be sent a ***stage 1 concern letter*** inviting them to discuss any issues or support needed to improve attendance as a matter of urgency. At this stage, illness absence will need to be ***accompanied by medical evidence to be authorised***.

If there is no improvement in attendance over the following two weeks, parents will be notified of this and asked to attend a ***stage 2 meeting at school with the Headteacher***. Referrals to 'Early Help' agencies may be an appropriate course of action at this stage.

#### Local Authority Referral

If a student has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in total and the range of actions outline above followed, we will inform the Local Authority Education Welfare Team. Parents / carers will receive a warning notice advising them of their responsibility to ensure their child is in school under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. In some cases, if there have been two penalty notices issued, court proceedings could be initiated via the 'Single Justice' procedure.

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

HEAD TEACHER

SIMS REGISTER:

RESPONSE SENT:

**PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Full Name of children: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

I intend to take my child/children out of school on the following dates. I understand that the absence of my child/children will be recorded as 'unauthorised' on the school's register and this will reflect in their overall attendance record.

Head Teachers have discretionary power to grant requests only in exceptional circumstances.

**Period 1**

Start date:

End Date:

TOTAL DAYS:

**EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Please indicate the reason for your child's absence. If this is for a holiday, please indicate why this holiday could not take place in the course of the normal school holiday pattern (please see the Guide for Parents on school website before writing your reasons).

**Absence for Medical Reasons** (eg. Operations and post-operative absence).

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_