

# Attendance Policy

## St. Mary's CE Primary School



<b>Approved by:</b>	Elizabeth Green	<b>Date:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2024	
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## 1. Aims

The vision of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust is to ensure life chances and educational achievements of all children in our schools are great because they **'flourish in the love of God'** through being a part of our strong trust. Our vision is deeply rooted in, and is an outworking of, the Church of England's Vision for Education. Elements Diocesan Learning Trust is committed in being **'Deeply Christian: Serving the Common Good'**, inspired by the particular scripture in John 10:10 where Jesus declares **'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'**.

Each school within the Trust is united by this central vision. Promoting regular attendance is part of creating effective schools which are committed to raising the levels of achievement of all pupils. It is an essential foundation for positive outcomes for all pupils; children cannot learn if they are absent. Those who have time away from school which could have been avoided put their future prospects at risk and are likely to become increasingly disaffected and alienated. Children not in school may also be at risk in other ways.

Therefore, all staff in Elements Diocesan Learning Trust have important responsibilities in relation to monitoring school attendance and promoting as high a level of attendance as possible. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation; it is part of each school's curriculum and improving attendance is everyone's business.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy also complies

with our trust's funding

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agreement and articles of association.

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the school's data protection policy published on the school's website.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Local School Committee

The Local School Committee is responsible for:

- › Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authorities
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- › Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- › Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- › Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- › Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- › Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers from across the trust, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- › Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- › Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- › Holding the headteacher of the school to account for the implementation of this policy

#### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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- › The implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- › Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- › Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- › Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

### 3.3 The trust attendance lead

The trust attendance lead is responsible for:

- › Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- › Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- › Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries
- › Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes

The trust attendance lead is the School Improvement Advisor and can be contacted via [enquiries@edlt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@edlt.org.uk)

### 3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the '**senior attendance champion**') is responsible for the below. They may delegate and oversee some of the following, ensuring they continue to uphold the vision for improving and maintaining good attendance and closely monitor attendance in the school.

- › Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- › Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- › Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance
- › Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- › Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Deciding when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- › Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Amy Wainwright and can be contacted via [awainwright@st-marys-ki.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:awainwright@st-marys-ki.dudley.sch.uk)



### 3.6 Class Teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by the end of the morning and afternoon registration period.

Class teachers are also responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the senior attendance champion where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing additional information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues at parent/carer consultation evenings where necessary

### 3.7 School Admin Staff

Staff in the school office will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the pastoral lead/senior attendance champion where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Collate and record registration and attendance information
- Contact parents of absent children where no parental contact has been received
- Record details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the senior attendance champion
- Send out standard letters regarding attendance and punctuality

### 3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55 a.m. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school

### 3.9 Pupils

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Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day, on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

Each school will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Each school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50pm for KS1 and 1:20pm for KS2 and will be kept open until 12:55pm for KS1 and 1:25pm for KS2.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin staff, who can be contacted via 01384818295.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is

longer than 5 days or there

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are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

### 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.

Parents should request a leave of absence form via the school office.

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

Schools will closely track punctuality on a weekly basis and contact parents via phone call or email regarding pupil lateness. Where lateness persists. A more formal, yet supportive, conversation will be held with the parents and the school's headteacher to plan appropriate interventions to tackle the punctuality issues.

### 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 primary named contact on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the primary contact cannot be contacted a voice message will be left where possible asking the parent to contact the school to provide a reason for absence. If contact cannot be made with the primary contact, the school will contact the emergency contacts held on file for the child. App messages will also be used to try and get in touch with the primary contact to ascertain a reason for a child's absence. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, contact Dudley Children's Services or contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below)



## 4.6 Reporting to parents

Each school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.8 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

In the Autumn term, attendance information will be reported to all parents at the Autumn Term Parents' Evenings.

In the Spring term, attendance information will be reported to parents via the Spring Term Parents' Evenings.

In the Summer term, attendance information will be reported to parents via the pupil's annual report.

Parents of children who are persistent or severe absentees will receive weekly contact from the school, either via email or phone call, updating them in progress and any concerns.

We report whole school attendance to parents regularly.

## 4.7 Attendance expectations of Nursery Pupils (Where applicable)

Nursery attendance is not compulsory as children are not at compulsory school age, however throughout our Nursery curriculum we promote and celebrate good attendance. Good attendance is a learned behaviour and it is important to develop good patterns of attendance from the outset. Elements Diocesan Learning Trust believes this starts in Nursery. Nursery children take part in all whole-school activities to promote good attendance. Parents are contacted in the same way regarding celebrating attendance and also regarding concerns to pupil absence by the school.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

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

Other valid reasons for

**authorised absence**





include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our Trust will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first**

penalty notice, the parent

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must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

It is our aim that this clear approach to handling attendance matters with established monitoring procedures will lead to increased rates of actual attendance.

Every opportunity is taken to highlight the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents, including giving information about attendance and absence levels. Throughout the school year we will introduce different ways of celebrating good attendance with the children and will ensure through the curriculum we educate children on the importance of being at school.

It is important that parents understand why we consider good attendance to be important, the school's attendance procedures and why we monitor absence so closely. At Nursery and Reception Induction, as children first join our school, parents are given information about attendance, including an attendance factsheet. At the start of each academic year, all parents are also sent the attendance factsheet, with further information for parents available on the school website, including this policy.

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### 7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

It is our aim to work with families, both pupils and parents, to improve attendance for vulnerable pupils and pupils with attendance below 90% (persistent absentees) and 50% (severe absentees) and where complex barriers are in place.

In this instance, regular meetings will be held with parents to discuss attendance and engagement at school. Schools will listen to families to try and understand barriers to being in school and will discuss with families actions and interventions to address them. In-school support, such as direct work with the school's Senior Mental Health Lead or Learning Mentors, may be put in place. The child's voice is highly important here, and

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where appropriate, the child's views will be sought and from this adaptations may be able to be put in place to help the child attend school. Adaptations, such as entering school through a different door, regular drop-ins with a Learning Mentor or Senior Mental Health Lead, direct sessions and so forth, will be reviewed on a regular basis.

If absence intensifies, support from wider partners and external professionals will be sought so families have the right support at the right place at the right time. This may include a voluntary Early Help referral in order to ensure that the most appropriate professionals are working together to support the family.

Where engagement in support is providing challenging, schools will hold more formal conversations with parents. This will be led by the Headteacher and/or Senior Mental Health Lead and include a point of contact from the Local Authority. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil (where appropriate) and family and the potential need for legal intervention in the future. This meeting will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective or had not been engaged with, the school will work with the Local Authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance)
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

In all cases, schools will monitor the impact of any interventions and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family.

Where pupils have had a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, support will be provided to build confidence and to bridge learning gaps. This may include planning and review meetings with the pupil and family, an age-appropriate re-integration programme for the child and/or direct work with the child in school with the school's Senior Mental Health Lead or Learning Mentors.

## **7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupils and therefore, schools have the same attendance ambition for these pupils as for any pupil.

Schools aims to work with pupils and families where attendance is a concern, putting additional support in place where necessary to help pupils access full-time education. This includes:

- Holding conversations with pupils and families to develop a good understanding and good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. An individual healthcare plan, direct sessions with the Senior Mental Health Lead or Learning Mentors in school or support from external partners may be put in place where needed and appropriate.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. This may include review of the child's EHCP with the school's Inclusion Lead and accessing support from external partners.
- Removing in-school barriers pupils' face, considering reasonable adjustments to school routines and additional support accessed in school. This may include focused pastoral care led by the Senior Mental Health Lead. A time-limited phased return may also be appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

Data for these groups is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and shared with the Local School Committee termly and the Local Authority in Targeting Support Meetings.



Pupils with long term illness or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provisions provided by the Local Authority. In this instance, the school will work closely with all agencies and family members to ensure this transition is smooth and appropriate for the child.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### **7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence**

Where a child is returning to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school will put into place a re-integration plan to support the child and the family. This will include a meeting with the family, including the child, to discuss possible adaptations required to help the child settled back into school life. Adaptations may include a planned, swift build-up to full-time education, ensuring that the child reaches full-time education quickly whilst meeting their needs, schools putting in place any equipment, risk assessments or individual health care plans required, any classroom adaptations, such as where a child sits or additional support with learning, building up friendships through dedicated friendship time and direct work with the Senior Mental Health Lead and/or Learning Mentor of the school.

The re-integration plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure outcomes are meeting the needs of the pupil and contributing well to full-time education.

## **8. Attendance monitoring**

The senior attendance champion (who may delegate this responsibility) is responsible for monitoring pupil absence on a weekly basis. When a child's attendance is first noted as a cause for concern an initial letter is sent home explaining to parents that there is a concern and inviting them to contact school if there is a problem. If the child's attendance does not improve and there is no legitimate reason for this, a follow up letter will be sent. This will explain that the child's attendance will be formally monitored by the school and absence may not be authorised without medical evidence. Possible involvement of the Local Authority and wider professional agencies will be actioned if attendance does not improve which could ultimately lead to legal interventions. This monitoring will include routine telephone contact from school on each day of absence if no information has been received and a formal meeting with parents.

Weekly attendance monitoring will also be shared with class teachers to ensure a joined up approach to targeted interventions and promoting positive attendance. Pupil-level absence data will be collected each half-term, term and at the end of an academic year and analysed to identify patterns and trends, with the results used to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it the most. Pupil cohorts analysed include:

- Boys
- Girls
- Those in receipt of Free School Meals
- Those children in receipt of Pupil Premium
- Those children with a social worker, including Children Looked After
- Those children on the school's SEND register

The Headteacher benchmarks school attendance data alongside published local, regional and national data to identify areas of focus for improvement and a full report is shared with the school's Local School Committee each term.

From data analysis, targeted improvement work for individual children, identified cohorts or persistent/severe absentees will be carried out by the school. This can include:

- Further pupil incentives, e.g.



improvement stickers/certificates/ individualised approach

- › Further training for class teachers to develop curriculum delivery and prominence
- › Meetings with parents to offer support and guidance
- › Meeting with parents and wider professional agencies to ensure families get the right support at the right time
- › Offering Early Help support for families
- › Working with the Local Authority to promote good attendance

The School Improvement Advisor and Trustees of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust will provide support and challenge to schools around current trends on attendance in the school community, by:

- › Regularly reviewing attendance data at board meetings. This includes thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide. Schools will report attendance information to the board of trustees at least termly.
- › Paying particular attention to attendance of pupil cohorts within their school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance. This should be specific to the school's context, but may include pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals.
- › Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas. In addition, for schools that are struggling with their attendance, the trust board will work with school leaders to develop a comprehensive attendance action plan to improve attendance. This should be evaluated and reviewed regularly. This may form part of a wider school improvement plan, including where appropriate school-to-school support from system leaders. Where necessary, termly attendance review meetings may be held with individual schools.

Half-termly school development impact days provide regular opportunities to bring together staff from schools within the Trust to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. This will be tailored to the needs of their schools and pupils but can include, sharing exemplar resources and documents such as communications to pupils and parents, regular networking or Q&A sessions, and topical best practice training or webinars.

## 8.1 Monitoring attendance

Each school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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.

Each school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Local School Committee.

## 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data

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regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance

- › Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- › Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- › Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools

### **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- › Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- › Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Local School Committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- › Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### **8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Trust's strategy for improving attendance.

Each school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- › Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- › Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)



## 9. Staff Training and Professional Development

Schools ensures that all staff receive the training and professional development they need, including:

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

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. In addition, this will 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.

## 10. Contact details of school staff parents can contact regarding attendance

Mrs Amy Wainwright, Headteacher, is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School. Mrs Wainwright can be contacted by email at [info@st-mary-ki.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-mary-ki.dudley.sch.uk) or by phone, 01384 818295.

Office staff are available daily to take attendance messages and to answer any day to day attendance queries. Office staff can be contacted by email at [info@st-mary-ki.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-mary-ki.dudley.sch.uk) or by phone, 01384 818295.

## 11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher of each school. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Local School Committee.

## 12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy
- › Anti-bullying policy
- › Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy
- › Suspension and permanent exclusion 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment





<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open



<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

