

William Cassidi Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy Statement

'Life in all Fullness'
(John 10:10)



As a school, we want to provide learners with the very best education. To let them experience life in all its fullness and living with all their heart. Our main core value of love underpins all that we do. Our school is Christ-centred and our core Christian values of love, respect, courage, service and resilience flow through every aspect of school life. It is on this bedrock that we provide an excellent education for our whole school family. We want our entire school community to be the very best that they can be and to recognise that they are precious, loved and valued.

Introduction

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education. Our school vision is 'Life in all Fullness' and we believe education is central to this vision being lived.

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Statement of Intent

We believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Staff, pupils and parents will work together to enable this to happen. Any barriers hindering full attendance will be identified and removed as quickly as possible. The aim of the school is to facilitate pupil's regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to achieve their full academic and pastoral potential. We want our school community to live a 'life in all fullness'; regular attendance at school enables our vision to be lived by ensuring pupils gain the most from their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. DFE national data evidences that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. EEF research also demonstrates a direct correlation between good attendance and attainment.

Guidance on Working Together to Improve Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da444f4c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires all stakeholders to work collaboratively. All stakeholders should work together to:

1. **MONITOR:** Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
2. **EXPECT:** Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
3. **LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND:** When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all stakeholders can work together to resolve them.

4. **FACILITATE SUPPORT:** Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
5. **FORMALISE SUPPORT:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, stakeholders should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance support plan or attendance referral. Ensure parents are aware of the local authority attendance tier system so that parents/carers are aware of 'end points' and 'next steps'.
6. **ENFORCE:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to safeguard the pupil's right to an education.

School Expectations

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Appoint an 'Attendance Champion' at senior leadership level.
- Have a clear school attendance policy, which all staff, pupils and parents/carers understand.
- Accurately complete electronic registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other external agencies when absence is at risk of becoming persistent.

Local Authority Maintained Schools

William Cassidi Church of England Primary School work in partnership with both the Diocese of Newcastle/Durham and Stockton local authority. As a local authority maintained school, we ensure the local authority attendance tier system is implemented into practice to reduce the potential for any persistent absenteeism. A pupil with attendance below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee.

Tier 1 – School Level Interventions

- 1st day response
- Regular home visits
- Regular (and more than 1) meetings to discuss concerns and support. These must be minuted and include an attendance improvement plan
- Attendance plans must have SMART targets and detail the support to be given
- Parent and pupil views must be evidenced
- Escalation to the senior lead for attendance in the school e.g records of meetings/logs
- Details of reasonable adjustments – Academic/ pastoral/ Adjustment to school day
- Use of Alternative Provision (where appropriate)
- Information and support given relating to any SEND need

Tier 2 – Support from other agencies

- Advice and guidance from the school support adviser
- Offer of early help (Help and Support)
- SMART referral (if appropriate)
- Request for outreach for pupils with SEND needs, for example SEMH support
- Specialist referrals to other agencies, for example, mental health, 0-19 service etc
- Reviews for EHCP pupils where appropriate
- Referrals of a safeguarding nature, for example MACE, CHUBB
- Evidence of attendance being discussed at other meetings e.g., CIN/CP/PEP

Tier 3 – Referral to Vulnerable Learners Team

1. Please use the email address below to make the referral if the above support has been given and the attendance has not improved significantly, and the rate of unauthorised absence remains high.
2. Please also email the evidence for the referral to attendance.vlt@stockton.gov.uk

Expectations of Local Authorities

As a minimum, all local authorities are expected to:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.

Targeting Support Meetings: hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.

Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.

Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies:

- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

The Governing Body therefore ensures our school:

- Has an attendance policy which meets the expectations outlined in 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance' (August 2024): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da444f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf
- Reviews the processes of recording attendance accurately on registers and admissions.
- Works effectively with local partners to help remove the barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates, including building strong links with local statutory services (including social care, health and police) and the voluntary and community sector.
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.

- Ensures school staff receive adequate training on attendance including its importance, the law, keeping of registers, procedures for tracking and following up attendance, skills to interpret and analyse data, processes for working with other partners and to provide support to families who need it.

Daily Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. From 19th August 2024 all schools must adhere to using statutory attendance codes, which are directly imported into the school management and information system (SIMs). From 19th August 2024 every school in England will share their daily attendance registers across the education sector - including with the department for education, councils and trusts.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers. In accordance with legislation, each class in school has an electronic attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9:05am and 1:05pm when they will be saved. It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place. We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their own work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place. Punctuality will be monitored on a half-termly basis and parents/carers will be notified of data analysis results three times per year via reporting and parental consultations.

Procedure for Reporting a Pupil Absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We request notification as soon as possible that the child will be absent from school. A telephone call to the school office enables the absence to be appropriately recorded. We request that school is informed each day of absence and a likely date when the child will return to school is provided (context dependent). If a child is absent from school and the absence has not been reported then the school will undertake 'first response' and telephone parents/carers to ascertain the reason why a child is not in school. School records all absences and the reasons provided for absences, which can be monitored. Home visits may also be conducted during a first day of absence if there is a safeguarding concern.

Unauthorised Absence Processes

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents/carers. The fact that a parent/carer has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence must be treated as unauthorised. From the 19th August 2024, a fine will be issued to parents/carers by local authorities if a child misses 5 days of school for unauthorised absence within a 10 week period. These days can be five consecutive days (term time leave) or a combination of 5 days in total across a 10 week period (irregular attendance).

The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance the cost will be £80.00 if paid within 21 days or £160.00 if paid within 28 days. The fines apply per parent, per child e.g. 3 siblings would result in each parent receiving three separate fines.

The second time a penalty notice is issued (within 3 years) for term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160.00 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days. No discount is offered.

The third time an offence is committed (within 3 years) for term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued and the case will be presented to the magistrates court. Magistrate fines can be up to £2,500.00 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a magistrates court can show on a future DBS certificate due to a failure to safeguard a child's education.

Authorised Absence Processes

An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage school based avoidance. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised. No offence is committed whereby a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised. Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school 'Attendance Champion' will liaise with the local authority attendance and safeguarding team. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made.

Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent (either in person, in writing or by telephone call) or on production of an appointment card. Parents / carers are encouraged to make appointments, wherever possible, outside of normal school hours. Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly, a school must note the presence of a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. Signing in and out slips are available in the reception area to record timings and reasons.

Requests for Absence Procedure

Parents/carers must complete an Absence Request Form, which they may obtain from the school website or office, if they wish to remove their child from school for any purpose. It must be completed and returned to the child's class teacher, who will forward it to the school office, before the absence is taken. The Headteacher will then review the absence request form. The Headteacher can only grant an authorised absence under exceptional circumstances. If more than the determined days are taken then the absences will be classified as unauthorised.

Lateness

We actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional school transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period. For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. The Headteacher will monitor arrivals each morning and speak with families if poor punctuality is observed; particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival. Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the office. Children arriving late to school will be recorded with a signing in and out slip (accessible in the reception area) by the adult bringing them to school. In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to seek an early meeting with parents whilst keeping the Headteacher informed. If the parents/carers do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the Headteacher will work with the family and external services to overcome issues.

Attendance Referrals

From September 2024, all schools have been automatically enrolled on to a digital portal, which links directly to the inclusion and vulnerable learner team at Stockton Borough Council. An attendance referral will be made through this platform by the Headteacher / Attendance Champion in line with guidance from 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance - August 2024'.

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

As well as taking appropriate action against parents/carers who fail to secure the regular attendance or good punctuality of their children, we reward good attendance and punctuality. We use both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to raise the profile of attendance across the school community. Each week classes celebrate attendance and punctuality in Celebration Worship. We celebrate attendance in two ways: individually and as a class collective. The 'class collective' approach enables a competitive element to be brought to the celebration worship each week with a visual class leader board and a class trophy. The first class to reach the top of the leader board will receive an enrichment experience of their choosing (aligned with the school vision). EEF research evidences that this approach works particularly well with pupils in KS2. On an individual level we also award half-termly stickers to all children who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality. The children who achieve 100% attendance each term are presented with a certificate in Celebration Worship. Annual 100% certificates and prizes are given at the end of the Summer term during the final Celebration Worship of the academic year.

The School Admission Register

The school admission register, sometimes known as the 'the school roll', must be kept in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2024. Regulation 8 sets out the contents of the admission register. The names of all pupils (both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) must be entered on the admission register. The admission register must be kept electronically.

Schools must enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school (and a person with control of the pupil's attendance) have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name must be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before or at the beginning of the first session on that day. Most school admissions involve the school or admission authority offering a place to the parent/carer of the prospective pupil. An offer of a place is not an agreement. Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or the pupil attending the school on that day. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place and starting day offered, the local authority can communicate that agreement to schools on behalf of the parent.

This can also be the case where the local authority co-ordinate in-year applications for school places. If a pupil fails to attend school on the agreed starting day, the school is expected to follow this up and try to establish the reason for absence. If they are unable to locate the pupil, schools should notify the local authority. In accordance with regulation 13 (1) to (3), a school must make a return to the local authority within 5 days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register (a New Pupil Return) and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. Schools must record the personal details of every pupil at the school in the admission register. The register must include the following information for every pupil:

- Full name
- Name the pupil uses at school
- Sex
- Address
- The full name and address of each of the pupil's parents
- Which of the pupil's parents, if any, the pupil normally lives with and at least one telephone number by which each such parent can be contacted in an emergency.

The DfE's advice is that where reasonably practicable, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person for each pupil:

- Day, month and year of birth
- Day, month and year of the pupil's starting day at the school
- Name and address of the last school the pupil attended, if any.

Where a parent of a pupil informs the school that the pupil will live at another address, whether in addition to or instead of the address at which the pupil currently lives, the school must ensure that the admission register contains:

- The address
- The full name of each parent the pupil will normally live with
- The date when the pupil will start normally living there

Where a person with control of a pupil's attendance has told the school that the pupil is or will be attending another school, the school must ensure that the admission register contains:

- The name of the other school;
- The date when the pupil began or will begin attending that school.

This also applies where the school itself is requiring the pupil to attend another school, for example, to receive education intended to support their special educational need (off site direction e.g. an additionally resourced provision).

Maintaining the Admission Register

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Schools should encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur and must ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible. A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off-rolling. In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register (a Deletion Return). This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the school's most senior class (for example, pupils who leave primary school at the end of Year 6), unless the local authority has requested such information. Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, as set out in regulation 13(4), the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency; if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school

The admission register and attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. Where a pupil is transferring to another school, the original school must delete the pupil's name from the admission register as soon as they are entered on the admission register of the new school. The new school must enter the pupil's name on the admission register on the first day that it has agreed or been told the pupil will attend the school.

Attendance and Absence Codes

National codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of (and the reason for) absence and the delivery of education.

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
 Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
 Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
 Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
 Code Cl: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
 Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
 Code JI: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
 Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
 Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
 Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
 Code D: Dual registered at another school
 Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
 Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
 Code R: Religious observance
 Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
 Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded
 Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
 Code YI: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
 Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
 Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
 Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
 Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
 Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
 Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
 Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
 Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
 Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
 Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed
 Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register
 Code #: Planned whole school closure

Relevant Government Guidance:

- Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
- Children missing in education
- Keeping children safe in education
- Working together to safeguard children
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities

- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying
- Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence
- Working together to improve school attendance

Policy approved by the Governing Body: October 2024
Date for Review: October 2025

Appendix 1

WILLIAM CASSIDI C.E. AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING SCHOOL TERM TIME

Name of Child(ren):.....

School Year:

Address:.....

I/We request that the above named child(ren) be considered for approved absence from William Cassidi C.E. Aided Primary School on:

..... to (inclusive)

Proposed destination:

Exceptional circumstances which determine the request for absence during term time:

.....

.....

Signature of parent/carer:

Date:

THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FORWARDED TO THE HEADTEACHER BEFORE THE REQUESTED PERIOD OF ABSENCE TO ENABLE THE REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED AND A REPLY TO BE MADE

THE HEADTEACHER MAY NOT GRANT LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME UNLESS THERE ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE HEAD TEACHER WILL DETERMINE IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE EXCEPTIONAL FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL REQUEST.

Name of Child(ren):

School Year:

Period of absence requested: From: to

Absence: authorised/not authorised

Signed: Head Teacher Date: