Through God We Achieve

OUR VISION AT ST. STEPHEN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

To deliver outstanding education in a caring community, with God at its centre

'Turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding'.   Proverbs 2:2

OUR VALUES:

Joy - we provide a happy and stimulating environment, rooted in Christian values.

Excellence - we are a church school committed to the highest standards in everything we do.

Relationship – we work hand-in-hand with St Stephen's Church as well as our parents and carers.

Respect - we enable our children to deepen or realise their own faith and respect the freedom of others in their beliefs.

Nurture – our children are cared for spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

	Policy to be reviewed as required and at least annually		
Action	Owner	Date	Completed
Updated	Sally Bouwman	January 2023	✓
Next Review	Sally Bouwman	January 2025	

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure the continued excellent attendance and punctuality of all children at St. Stephen's CE Primary school
- To make explicit the ways in which attendance and punctuality are monitored in the school and by whom
- To explain how unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence and/or lateness will be addressed

The vast majority of pupils regularly attend school and arrive promptly. However, there are a small proportion of pupils who need support to improve their attendance and/or punctuality. Pupils who do not attend regularly miss a tremendous amount of education, which can be difficult to make up. Lateness to class is disruptive both to the late arriving child and to their peers.

The intended outcome of monitoring attendance is:

- That all children attend school regularly and for at least 97% of the academic year
- That all absences are authorised
- That parents/carers notify the school on the first day of their child's absence
- That all children arrive promptly at school every day utilising the soft start, from 8.45am

Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the Head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sally Bouwman and can be contacted via s.bouwman@ststephensce.lbhf.sch.uk

Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office every morning and afternoon registration.

School admin team

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Transfer messages from parents to the Head teacher or other senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head teacher

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Strategies for promoting attendance) and School Absence Procedure (Appendix 2)

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Contact the school via Parentmail, phone or email to report their child's absence before 9am 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

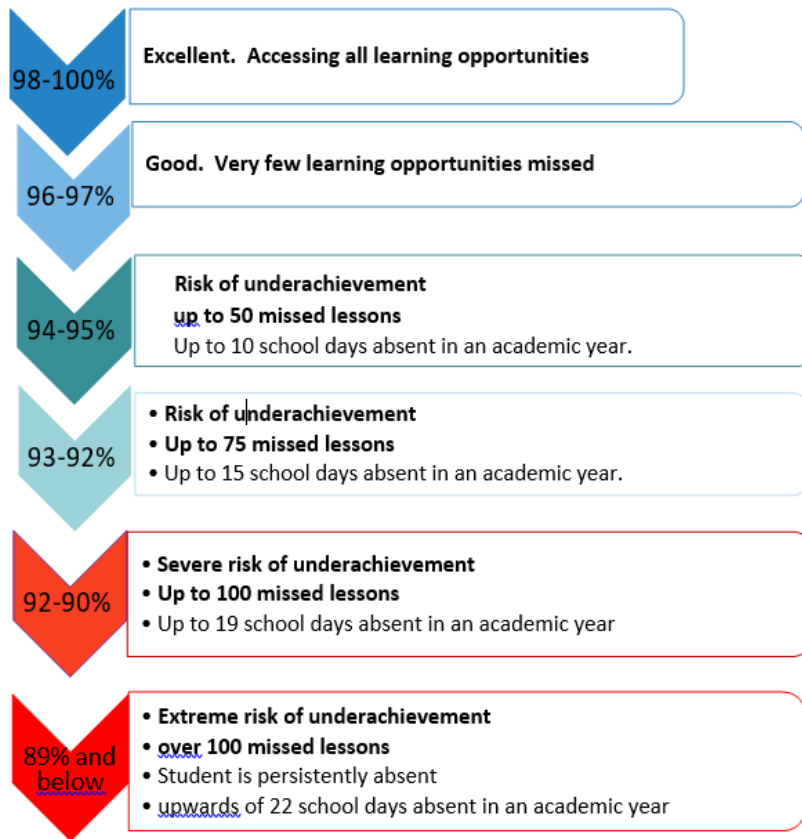- Work with the school in resolving any problems together

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, appropriately prepared for the day

Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success. Our expectation as a school are for 97% attendance and the maximum late arrival to school would be twice a term.

98-100%	Excellent. Accessing all learning opportunities
96-97%	Good. Very few learning opportunities missed
94-95%	Risk of underachievement up to 50 missed lessons Up to 10 school days absent in an academic year.
93-92%	• Risk of underachievement • Up to 75 missed lessons • Up to 15 school days absent in an academic year.
92-90%	• Severe risk of underachievement • Up to 100 missed lessons • Up to 19 school days absent in an academic year
89% and below	• Extreme risk of underachievement • over 100 missed lessons • Student is persistently absent • upwards of 22 school days absent in an academic year

The school day

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1   8.55am – 3.25pm (8.45am soft start Y1-Y2)
Key Stage 2   8.55am – 3.30pm (8.45 am soft start)

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will take our attendance register in the morning and afternoon of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

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 if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. We operate a soft start when children can arrive to the classroom from 8.45am

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10/1.30pm

Unplanned absence

In the event that a child is absent the parent/carer must telephone the office as soon as possible. Parents/carers can leave a message on the pupil absence voicemail system, giving details of the child's full name, their class and the reason for absence.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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, ideally in writing or via telephone.

However, we do 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. A 'present' mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

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. Special requests for a period of absence should be made directly to the Head teacher in writing.

Lateness and punctuality

Children arriving late should go to the school office where the admin staff will record the time of arrival on the register.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason

- 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

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly attendance reports.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable or for which no 'leave' has been given. Family holidays for example, should not be taken during term time.

Very exceptional circumstances for leave during term time will be directed to the Head teacher for consideration. Parents/carers should outline reasons for requesting the leave of absence in writing.

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

It is not possible for the school to authorise absences for holidays, shopping, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may however be granted in an emergency or genuine pastoral reasons e.g. after the death of a close relative.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Children Missing Education

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school should make an immediate referral to H&F Children Missing Education (CME) Service.

The Children Missing Education Service

Cathy Sciueref
Children Missing Education (CME)
Tel: 020 8753 6330
Mb:07769 287 452
cathy.sciueref@lbhf.gov.uk

*Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts

- Letters home (including recorded delivery)

- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered

- Possible home visits where safe to do so

- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts

- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the student/family

- Outcomes to be recorded on CPOMs

If the pupil has registered at another school, the school will remove the child's name from our roll and transfer the child's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Pupils leaving the school for known destinations outside the maintained sector in England and Wales will be updated to the School-to-School database. This includes private/independent schools, schools in other countries (including Scotland and Northern Ireland) and pupils moving into home education. The latter will be formally notified to the Home Education Team by the school as soon as written confirmation is received from the parent(s). If no confirmation is received the above Missing Children procedures will apply.

Registers

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Headteacher has either approved in

advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, will be treated as unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Head teacher

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

The school complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categories absence (Appendix 1).

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school publishes the class attendance champion's figures on the school website every week.

The school will offer support to families in crisis with free Breakfast Club sessions to support improving attendance and punctuality.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data weekly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Send out letters and attendance reports to parents on a termly basis to ensure attendance and punctuality figures are shared

Health and Safety

Monitoring attendance and punctuality has a health and safety implication. Parents/carers may not be aware that children are absent from school or are arriving late if for example they come to school on their own. It is therefore imperative that we follow up all absences and inform parents if children are regularly late. Children may be at risk if they are not in school and there may be a truancy issue.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises during the school day unless parents/carers have requested this in person and permission has been granted. Written permission is needed from parents/carers if your child is to travel to and from school unaccompanied in Year 5 and 6.

We have a '48 hour absence from school' policy for those children who have had a vomiting or diarrhoea bug.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the senior leadership team.
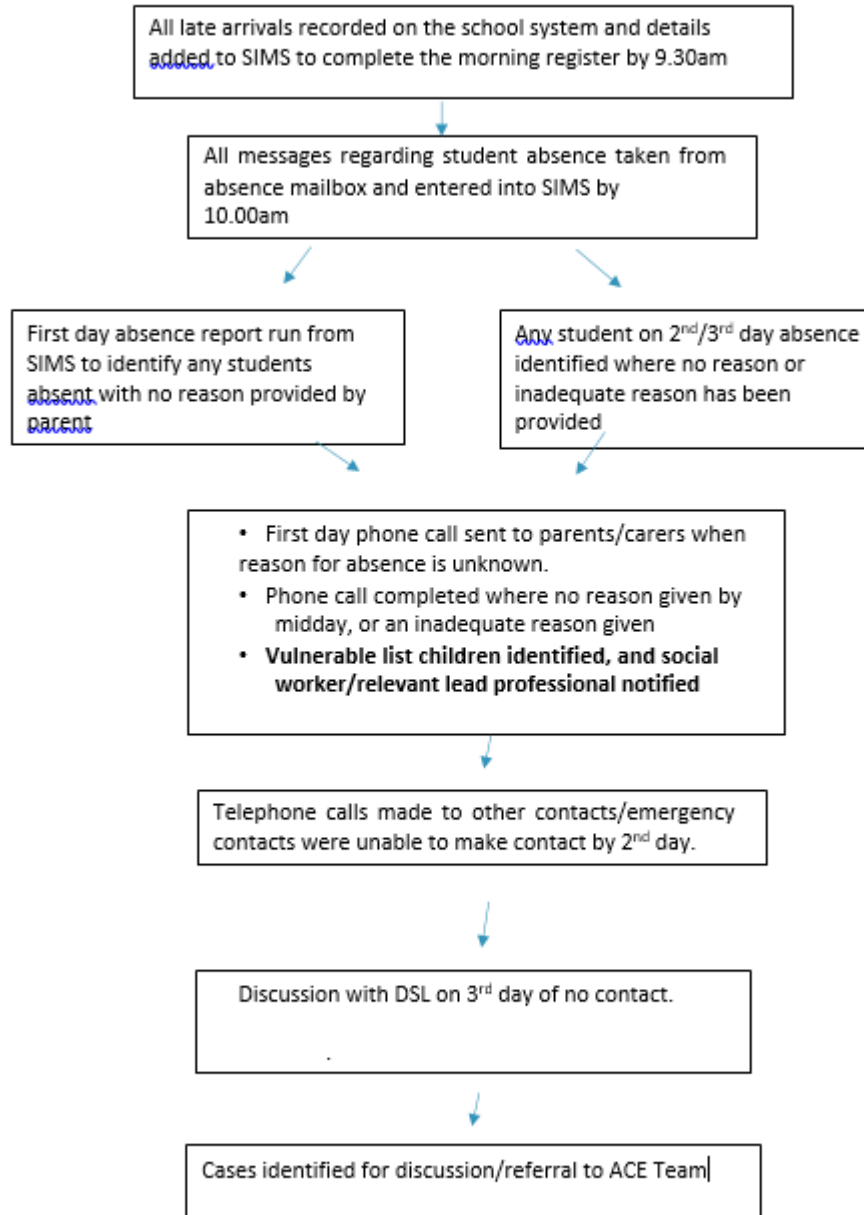
Appendix 1
DfE National Attendance codes, descriptions and meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e., Student attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
X		
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to Students	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

School Absence Procedure

School Absence Procedure

All late arrivals recorded on the school system and details added to SIMS to complete the morning register by 9.30am

All messages regarding student absence taken from absence mailbox and entered into SIMS by 10.00am

First day absence report run from SIMS to identify any students absent with no reason provided by parent

Any student on 2nd/3rd day absence identified where no reason or inadequate reason has been provided

- First day phone call sent to parents/carers when reason for absence is unknown.
- Phone call completed where no reason given by midday, or an inadequate reason given
- **Vulnerable list children identified, and social worker/relevant lead professional notified**

Telephone calls made to other contacts/emergency contacts were unable to make contact by 2nd day.

Discussion with DSL on 3rd day of no contact.

Cases identified for discussion/referral to ACE Team

Useful contacts

The Admissions Team has designated officers that will be checking and monitoring starters and leavers information returned and will be the key contact for any enquires.

Notification officer: Snjezana Burchell, snjezana.burchell@lbhf.gov.uk

The admissions team: 020 8753 1085

The **Family Support Service** are the point of contact for schools where pupils placed on a school roll have not arrived on their given start date. **Family Support Service:** familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk

ACE – Attendance (statutory function), Child employment, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME): kyria.parsons@lbhf.gov.uk (tel. 020 8753 6797)

ACE – Attendance (statutory function), Child employment, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME): cathy.sciueref@lbhf.gov.uk (tel. 020 8753 6330)