

# St Luke's Church of England (Aided) Primary School



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023-2024

**(Reviewed annually)**

Policy Reviewed: September 2023

Policy ratified by Governors: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Signature of Chair of FGP meeting:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Y. Farclous', is written over a faint, light-colored signature line.

Minute Number: 11

## Statement of Intent

St Luke's CE (A) Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

*'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.*

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies within the Disability Discrimination Act (2010)
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

The policy will be updated in line with current School Attendance Legislation as necessary.

## Our School Vision

Through our Christian values we will **aspire** to be more like Jesus; **believe** all as having equal worth and dignity in God's eyes and help all our children to **achieve** their God-given potential knowing that, **'we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us'**

Philippians 4:13.

Regular attendance at school is therefore essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to help all our children to **achieve** their God-given potential knowing that, **'we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us'** Philippians 4:13.

## Monitoring of Attendance

The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place the appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

## Aims

- To ensure each child has full access to all areas of the curriculum and the education they are entitled to
- To endeavour to provide support and guidance where appropriate to improve children's attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor and identify patterns in individual children's attendance and punctuality throughout the year, pinpointing irregularities and cause for concern.
- To provide information on which to base target setting for future attendance returns.
- To provide evidence and information for reporting to Parents/Carers, Governing body, LA and DFE.
- To maintain and improve on good attendance at a minimum of 96% and reduce lateness
- To comply with the legal requirements of the Education Act 1996

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
100%	<b>Outstanding</b>	Fantastic! What a superb attitude towards learning and progress, and life in school.
98%+	<b>Excellent</b>	Well done! This will help all aspects of your children's progress and life in school.
95 - 98%	<b>Good</b>	Well done, strive to build on this
91%-94%	<b>Poor</b>	Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school to improve the situation
Below 90%	<b>Unacceptable</b>	Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the education Welfare Officer (EWO) to improve your child's attendance

### **Whole School Involvement**

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all stakeholders of our school. However, in order to achieve our aims, specific staff have more involvement in the implementation of this policy. These include – Class teachers, Teaching Assistants, Children, Parents/Carers, School Administration Staff, Head teacher and Senior Leadership Team, along with the Education Welfare Service, School Governors and Strengthening Families Hub 3.

### **The Legal Position**

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the term in which a child turns five. Prosecutions are brought under S440 of the Education Act 1996

### **Registers**

Registers are STATUTORY LEGAL DOCUMENTS, which must be completed accurately by a member of teaching staff. Attendance registers are taken twice a day: at the start of the morning session and afternoon sessions.

Instructions for completing registers must be followed. The office staff will find out the reason for absences and enter the correct code. If they are in any doubt they will contact a member of SLT for clarification.

### **Absences**

Absences can only be authorised once the Attendance Officer or a member of SLT are satisfied that an acceptable explanation has been provided by parent/carer regarding the absence. It is important that absences can only be authorised by the school and not by the parent/carer.

If a member of staff is in doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, then this should be referred to the Head/Deputy/Assistant head teacher.

If a valid reason is given verbally or in writing by a Parent/Carer then the absence may be authorised. If the reason is unacceptable or not validated then it should be referred to the Attendance Officer to investigate further.

Marking the school register with 'N', is acceptable until the absence is clarified, but this should be removed within two weeks of the absence. Unauthorised absence should be recorded if no reason is supplied.

## **Procedures for Authorising Absence**

- Parents are required to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration.
- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied, parents are contacted to clarify the reason for absence.
- Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If an absent child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is a Child in Need attendance staff should inform Head/Deputy head immediately that the child is absent.
- If a child is absent from school and no contact can be made with parents/carers, the school's HSCLO will conduct a Home Visit.

## **Leave of absence during term time**

New legislation introduced in September 2013 states that parents do not have the right to take their child(ren) out of school during term time, parents can be fined for doing so except in exceptional circumstances. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't you risk being served a penalty notice from the local authority. It is recognised that absence from school directly impacts on learning. If a child misses a step; the next step of learning becomes much more difficult.

Special requests for leave of absence during term time should be made to the Deputy Head / Head teacher in person. Parents have no entitlement to leave of absence and authorisation will only be given for exceptional circumstances.

## **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

- All children's attendance figures will be printed weekly
- The Attendance Officer will analyse attendance patterns on a weekly basis
- Individual and whole school attendance, punctuality figures discussed and ways forward suggested.
- Children causing concern will be discussed along with actions taken and progress towards targets.
- All parents receive a letter if attendance falls below 95%.
- Children with attendance less than 90% are identified as causing concern
- Children who are regularly late are also identified as causing concern and parents will receive letters if their child has been late for more than 5 sessions in a two-week period.
- Children causing concern either related to absence or persistent lateness will then be referred to the LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer.
- The School's Attendance Officer will meet regularly with the designated LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer (3 x half-term) in order to discuss attendance issues, and advice sought on appropriate action.

## **Procedures for when attendance is causing concern**

- If a child's attendance/punctuality continues to cause concern, parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance/punctuality meeting involving the School Attendance Officer / Home-School Liaison Officer and the school's nominated LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer. Other professionals such as the School Nurse may also be invited. The meeting will be held in school in order to discuss absence issues and this may result in a Parenting Contract or EHA (Early Help Assessment) being offered.
- The pupil's attendance/punctuality will be monitored until it is no longer a concern.
- If parents/carers fail to attend meetings to discuss attendance issues and attendance or punctuality does not improve within a specific time, a Penalty Notice could be served.

## **Lost Children's Database**

If a child has not been present at school for four weeks and no contact has been made with school, following lengthy enquiries by the Education Welfare officer, the child will be off registered from school and will become part of the Lost Children's database.

## **Lateness**

- Lateness in attending school is an unauthorised absence. The school day begins at 8.55am.
- Children who are late must enter via the school reception.
- Where a child has been late for more than 5 sessions during a two-week period then a letter reminding parents about the importance of punctuality and offering any additional support will be sent.
- Children causing concern either related to persistent lateness will then be referred to the LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer.

If punctuality issues continue a referral may be made to the Behaviour & Attendance Officer who may take legal action which could result in a fine.

## **Celebrating Good Attendance**

We work hard to ensure our school's attendance improves and are keen to reward our pupils for their excellent attendance.

- Class teachers are encouraged to praise individuals and class attendance regularly
- Weekly class rewards for attendance are awarded – classes receive points for their class based on their position (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>). This is shared with parents/carers in the weekly newsletter. At the end of each half-term, points are collated and the class in the Infants and Juniors with the most points, win a treat or a reward, i.e. trip to the Cinema, trip to the park, DVD afternoon with popcorn, etc.
- Individual attendance certificates and prizes are awarded termly in the 'End of term Celebrate & Praise'.
- Attendance staff will regularly report attendance to other school staff to raise awareness and encourage good attendance.

## **Setting Targets**

The Local Authority sets target for all schools based upon past performance and national expectations. However the DfE and OFSTED have specific targets which place schools into national categories and tables which will be published for parental scrutiny each year.

## **Race Equality & Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access to a full education regardless of their gender, disability or ability. We are committed to providing a safe and happy school free from racist intimidation or harassment of any kind and for all our children to achieve their full potential.

## **Reporting Attendance**

Attendance is reported to pupil and parents/carers in a variety of ways:

- Attendance is reported on both the mid-year reports (February) and end of year reports (July).
- By publishing attendance and punctuality results on the weekly school newsletter and school web site
- Letters sent home for under 95% attendance.
- Attendance issues will be addressed by teachers during parent/carer evenings
- Through ongoing intervention throughout the year

Information is transferred to other schools by way of:

- Electronic data systems
- Common Transfer forms
- National Curriculum assessment records
- Passing on of annual reports

The school is required to make attendance returns to the DfE and the LA via School Census

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Headteacher should:

- Ensure legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance and punctuality
- Be responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy
- To review policy and procedures at least annually with all staff
- To discuss attendance and punctuality with new Parents/Carers and children
- To analyse authorised and unauthorised absence regularly with the Attendance Officer and LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer to discuss any attendance issues
- Reward and celebrate attendance
- Send letters home regarding attendance and lateness
- Identify and monitor individual absences and lateness, identifying patterns and trends and target improvements
- Make the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy available to parents
- Hold regular meetings to address attendance issues and implement strategies to increase attendance and reduce Persistent Absence

### The Governing Body should:

- Know and understand the school's policy and procedures for absence and lateness
- Have a designated governor responsible for monitoring and supporting the school with attendance and punctuality.
- Our designated Governors are Mrs Ann-Marie Hopkins & Mrs Lisa Miller (Link Governors for SEND, LAC & Pupil Welfare)

### The Attendance Officer should:

- Monitor individual attendance and lateness daily, identifying any patterns and absences
- Liaise with the Head teacher and LA Behaviour & Attendance Officer regarding absence and lateness
- Produce reports for the Head teacher and Governors summarising individual and whole school attendance.
- Communicate with Parents/Carers on attendance and punctuality
- Record and store contact with parents in an appropriate manner
- Follow up data and reports with regards to less than 95% attendance
- Follow up poor punctuality and communicate with parents and children to identify solutions
- Hold regular meetings with Head/Leadership team regarding attendance.
- Update attendance log for children causing concern.

### Class teachers should:

- Ensure that registers are completed in accordance with Attendance and Punctuality procedures
- Date any written letters received from parents/cares regarding lateness or attendance and file in register wallet
- Record any verbal messages from parents/carers regarding attendance or lateness and send to the Attendance Officer.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance or lateness with attendance staff.
- Complete registers by 9:00 a.m. and 5 minutes after afternoon registration. (dependent on Key Stage)

### Parents and Carers should:

- Parents/Carers should ensure children attend school every day and punctually
- Parents/carers should follow the school's policy and procedures
- Contact school to inform of any absences by phone or letter on the first day of the child's absence
- Provide evidence of medical conditions which may affect a child's attendance
- Inform school of any changes in family circumstances particularly new addresses or telephone numbers.

As highlighted in our School Mission, we will work hard to **establish effective links between home and school that enables parents and teachers to work together for the benefit of their child so that they can achieve their God-given potential**. The relationships developed between parents and school is essential to reinforce positive attitudes to teaching and learning which will therefore encourage positive attendance.