

Attendance Policy & Procedures (2025/26)



1 Introduction

A pupil's success at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is poor. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning resulting in a negative impact on pupils' attainment and wellbeing. As inclusive schools within the St Illtyds Cluster, we seek to provide school environments in which all young people can flourish as members of a happy, caring and safe community. It is our goal that all of our pupils attend school regularly and on time, making the most of the opportunities available to them.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. All absences need an explanation and accompanied with the appropriate symbol.

2 Registration Procedures

- To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils are registered electronically. Pupils are registered within the first ten minutes of each AM/PM session.
- Teachers and supply teachers are required to record **present (I)** or **absent (N)** against each pupil's name. No pupil may be left with a 'missing' mark.
- In instances of lateness, members of the office staff are required to alter the **absent (N)** mark to the **late (L)** mark (if arrival before 9:29) A **(U) mark (unauthorised absence)** is issued when a pupil arrives **30 minutes after the start of the school day**. If a pupil is late for school the expectation is that parents/carers present at the school office and state the reason for lateness (Please see Fixed Penalty Notice (6))

3 Procedures for notifying Pupil Absence

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school by telephone and/or email on the first day of their child's absence. Office staff will monitor telephone calls/recorded messages each morning. Should a pupil be absent from school without an explanation a text message will be sent to ask for a reason for absence. Further contact will be made if the absence continues for longer than one day and no response is received from the parents/carers. The reason for absence is recorded in the office by office staff

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Unauthorised Attendance

Definition

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences and the situation does not improve the school will follow the procedures set out in the **intervention & procedures section (7)** carried out by the School Attendance Officer (SAO).

The governing body reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

5. Leave of Absence (including Long-term absence)

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send electronic material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

We believe that pupils need to be in school for **all** sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a pupil to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of family holiday during term time. **Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday** and, in law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance. The considerations that the school will ascertain whether the request is because of an exceptional circumstance are outlined below:

- *Where a parent or pupil is experiencing a life limiting illness.*
- *Absences to visit family members are also not usually granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.*
- *Families may need time to recover from trauma, crisis or bereavement involving an immediate relative, i.e.: parent, guardian, carer, sibling or grandparent.*
- *Absence for a bereavement of a close family member, i.e.: other relative, is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.*
- *Absences for important religious observances, civil or ceremonial activity are often considered but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situation rather than regular recurring events.*
- *The needs of families of service personnel will be considered if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday times*

6. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

In some circumstances, the school may issue parents/carers with a warning notice before considering requesting a full Fixed Penalty Notice. A **warning notice** will be requested where a child has relatively low level of unauthorised absence, i.e. for casually condoned absences and not entrenched cases. They will be requested for the following reasons:

- **Unauthorised Sessions** ~ *Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive)*
- **Punctuality** ~ *Pupils persistently arrive after the close of the registration period i.e. more than 10 sessions in the current term. (Parents must be given a warning of punctuality through a letter of concern therefore punctuality must be a priority on weekly tracking of attendance)*

- **Holidays~** An unauthorised holiday is taken during term time after 1 week holiday has already been taken (note that no warning letter will be received). A FPN will also be issued if previous years attendance is below **92%**. (**Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, by law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance**)

FPN's will not be used to address entrenched attendance problems as the LA will no longer accept requests for an FPN where a pupil's attendance is under 70% as this is the threshold for referral to the EWS. In these cases, the child/ren will already be working with the School Attendance Officer and move through the LA/School 5 step approach in order to meet referral criteria from SAO to EWS

7. Interventions & Procedures

The School Attendance Officer (SAO) from St Illtyds High School, through a service level agreement, will carry out the following approach (*where there is siblings attendance data this must be shared and analysed to look for trends and patterns):

Stage one

Weekly analysis of school Attendance Spreadsheet (HWB). Main focus;

- *Pupils below 90%*
- *Declining pupil attendance over time (85% below)*
- *Unauthorised attendance*
- *Groups of Learners (eg ALN – PSP)*
- *Persistent punctuality issues (**Weekly Friday check by Office staff**)*
 - *Weekly late book check*
 - *Letter sent for **3 lates** in 2-week period. **Office staff to inform** class teacher of letters sent.*
 - *Letter recorded on pupils **Abor** by Office Staff*
 - *10 incidents a FPN is issued***

Stage Two

Phone call to parents/ carers of pupils of concern to share next steps. Action and reasons recorded on School attendance Spreadsheet (HWB)

Stage Three

Letter 1 – Raising awareness with parents that school are monitoring their child's attendance due to concerns moving on from Stage

Two phone call. Medical Evidence only for authorised absences.

Stage Four

Letter 2 – Letter to parents/ carers to arrange a meeting with SAO & AHT at the school to discuss what further support can be offered and appropriate referrals made if necessary. **Meeting focus-** to introduce SAO in person to the family and a discussion about attendance expectations, possible support networks, timings and next steps. **SAO to make home visits if concerned at this stage.**

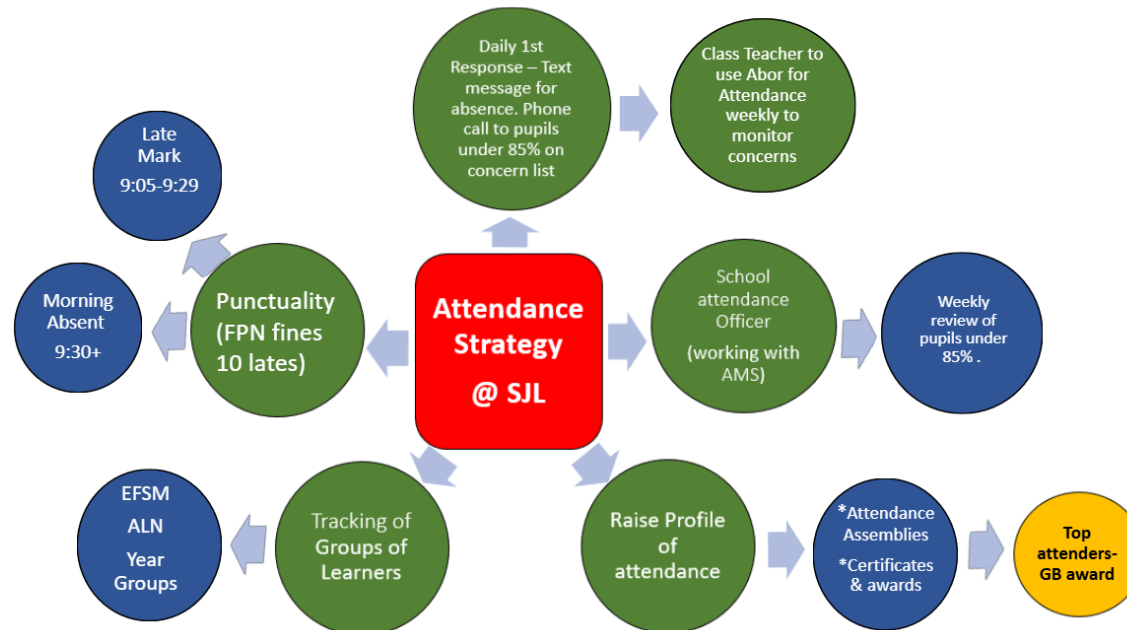
Stage Five

Letter 3 – Letter to parents/cares to arrange a meeting with SAO & DHT/ HT. **Meeting focus-** to share serious attendance concerns & possible referral to EWO. Previous support offered will be discussed, progress and a plan of action and next steps shared.

Stage Six

Referral made to Education Welfare Team including all procedures followed, notes from meeting & attendance data/ trends.

****Any pupils who has attendance 70% (Nov- July) or below MUST be referred immediately to Education Welfare Services****



8. Rewards for good attendance

All the pupils who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any pupil who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year along with prizes. Class attendance is also rewarded weekly. Classes are rewarded with the best attendance mentioned in the newsletters and are awarded class golden/ free time. Classes receive the SJL bear for the best attendance each half term.

9. Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meetings. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

10. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

