

Attendance Policy

St Hild's College CE Aided Primary School



Academic Year

2022/23

At St Hild's we let the light of Jesus shine through all we do. St Hild shone like a bright jewel. We follow her example, not hiding our light, but letting our unique gifts shine brightly. We are an inclusive, loving community, where everyone is valued and nurtured to grow and fulfil their God-given potential.

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Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

St Hild's College CE Aided Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

At St Hild's, we want all of our children to get the most out of their education and attending school regularly is an important part of every child's education. At St Hild's, we value the role of parents/carers and we work in partnership with families to ensure that we are able to fully meet every child's needs. We are here to support parents/carers if their child has any problems attending school. Having a good education will help to give children the best possible start in life. Most children are normally educated at school and regular attendance is vitally important. Poor school attendance damages educational achievement and the future progress of young people. Promoting and supporting good attendance at school is essential to learning and attainment. We want all of our children to Shine Bright. The aims of this attendance policy are to provide all pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders with information relating to attendance and to outline the legal guidelines we are required to follow.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

Safeguarding

Behaviour

The school and all partners will work together to:

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.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



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.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners 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 a parenting contract or education supervision order.



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 protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly and at St Hild's CE Primary School, we seek to work actively with parents/carers to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend school every day. We do all we can to encourage children to attend and we put appropriate procedures in place to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children
- Ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new tasks
- Confidence and ability to work alongside others
- Opportunities to experience a range of activities

2. Attendance data

Children should attend school every day. By law, it is the responsibility and duty of all parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and is on time. At St Hild's CE Primary School, we are working persistently to improve attendance throughout the year and to ensure that our attendance average is 96% or above in line with Ofsted requirements. We value and appreciate parents/carers continuous support in this matter.

At St Hild's CE Primary School, we consistently follow Government policy regarding attendance. Attendance can be summarised in the following way:

→ +97% - This will give a child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. This will help all aspects of progress and life in school.

→ 96% - This is the lowest attendance we expect for our pupils (in line with Ofsted guidance for schools).

→ 93% - we require medical evidence of all absences.

→ 90% - 92% - Poor - Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

Initially we strive to resolve any issues through dialogue with the child in school and parents.

- Class Teacher or Key Worker will establish a supportive dialogue with the child to help establish and understand the reasons for frequent absence or lates.
- Attendance Lead will establish supportive dialogue with parents, usually in a face to face meeting known as Attendance Planning Meeting, where underlying obstacles to attendance can be identified, supported and often resolved.

4. Facilitate support

Support can take a variety of forms and is dependent on the underlying issues.

- In some cases short term practical support is required and often school can offer this. For example – a parent may be injured or unwell for a period time and does not have family or support in the community to help with school runs. School can often offer practical solutions in such incidents.
- Where routines are not in place or not working at home which then have an adverse effect on attendance, school will offer practical advice on implementing effective routines and boundaries which will support improved attendance.
- Attendance Planning Meetings provide an opportunity for targets to be set and plans for working together to resolve attendance issues.
- Sometimes there can be complex factors that affect attendance and in such cases we encourage and support parents to access external advice and support through Early Help. Early Help Practitioners work with families in greater depth to achieve positive outcomes. They also have access to extended services and funding to help support families.

5. Formalise support

Absence below 90% is classed as **Persistent Absence** therefore can sometimes require more formalised support. In such cases our aim is for families and school to work together to improve attendance.

Should absence of 90% or below persist and where parents are reluctant to engage with school, more formal processes will be implemented. This may be in the form of a parenting contract whereby school will set targets and actions over a set period of time for parents to adhere to.

6. Enforce

Where all avenues have been exhausted and support is not accepted or not having any impact, attendance may be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. This means that you may receive a 'caution'. 'A caution' is a final warning before legal action is started.

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Mrs Ryder, Headteacher, has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

At St Hild's we strive to promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality. We present weekly certificates to the class with the best attendance in each Key Stage. Attendance percentages for each class will be displayed on classroom doors. Children who have good attendance or who have attendance that has improved will receive a letter from Mrs Ryder praising their attendance at the end of each term. School staff promote good attendance through regular conversations with children about its importance.

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, we will contact parents and failing that, extended family contacts provided by you, to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring ourselves of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Punctuality:

The school doors open at 8:45am, giving children time to enter school, enter their classroom and be ready for the start of the school day. Registration time is at 9.00am for children in Reception and through to Key Stage 2, it is 8.45am for children in nursery and the 2 year old nursery. At 9am, the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

The beginning of the day is often when children take part in some intervention work, phonics, guided reading or responding to marking and making corrections to previous work. Missing out on any of this work impacts negatively on the attainment of children. Pupils registers will be closed in the classroom at this point (9:05). A further 10 minutes

will be given for late arrival and any children arriving beyond 9:15 late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

If punctuality becomes an issue we will contact you and arrange a meeting so that we can find out why. At first this will be informal and we may be able to support you, or signpost you to services that can help.

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason, we will invite you to an Attendance Planning Meeting (APM), where we can discuss the issue and set targets for improvement.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

If the targets set in the APM are not met and punctuality remains a concern a more formal intervention will be taken as necessary, through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact us about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

This attendance policy takes into account the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those with medical conditions. In these cases the consideration of attendance will always take into account the reasons for absence in light of each child's individual needs. We will always consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.