



# St Lawrence Primary School

## Attendance Policy

**2024 - 2026**

**Review date: June 2026**

*Policy amendments may occur at any time, and you should consult the Policies page on the website for the latest update.*

## 1. Aims

The whole school community united in helping others and the environment locally, nationally and internationally (The Good Samaritan) and ensuring that every pupil becomes an ambassador of The St Lawrence Way (Be Responsible; Encourage Others; Show Respect and Try Our Best).

Our school will impact positively upon pupils' academic attainment, curriculum experience, attitudes and behaviour; as well as providing a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Our attendance policy has been written to keep children safe and to ensure every child is able to attain academically, developing positive attitudes and behaviour in line with the St Lawrence Way, whilst accessing the full range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school;
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons and getting to school on time.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the 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.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher 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;
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary;
- Working with the L.A. attendance officer to write letters regarding absence and lateness.

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (currently the designated senior leader is the headteacher).**

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;
- 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 the headteacher: **Alan Brannen**

### **3.4 The Local Authority attendance officer**

The L.A attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7);
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher ;
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The L.A. attendance officer is **Lori Caulfield** and can be contacted via 01743 251951 or [lori.caulfield@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lori.caulfield@shropshire.gov.uk)

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, / **or N** and submitting this information to the school office by 08:45 and 13:00.

### 3.6 School office staff

Office staff will:

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

Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher or family support worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time;
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:45 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. When the absence is due to vomiting the absence will be for 48 hrs from the last bout and so a daily call is required for the first 48 hours.
- 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. If appointments are during the school day parents/carers will provide the appointment letter to the school office to take a copy for the medical folder.
- We expect all children who are well enough for school to take part in all planned activities i.e. swimming, forest school, other PE sessions, hikes, outdoor play and school visits. If a child is not well enough to take part in any of these activities, we will authorise absence on medical grounds, but not on a regular basis. In exceptional circumstances, written advice from a medical practitioner may be required. For obvious injuries, such as plaster casts etc. children may be excused from swimming.

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day, be on time, and be ready to uphold the St. Lawrence Way:

- **Be responsible;**
- **Encourage others;**
- **Show respect;**
- **Try our best.**

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will be added under 'comments and will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 08:50. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:55 and will be kept open until 13:00.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office and speaking to a member of staff, by leaving a message on the answerphone or by recording the absence on Parentmail (See also section 7). If we are not contacted, we will phone and send a texts; if we do not receive information then our family support worker, another member of staff or the local PCSO will visit the home property.

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.

## **4.3 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.

To request leave of absence, parents/carers must first complete a form which is available from the school office.

However, we 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.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The headteacher or the education welfare officer will write to parents if punctuality is an issue.

#### **4.5 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. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask the family support worker to make a home visit or inform the police.
- 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 the L.A. attendance officer/EWO.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in an annual report and more frequently if there are any concerns.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' on a case by case basis but will never consider an annual family holiday to fall into this category.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request

form, available at the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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.
- Representing a sports team at a high level (county, regional or national).
- Music and dance examinations.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school.
- Visiting close family overseas will be considered on a case by case basis.

N.B. We have made a decision not to facilitate flexi-schooling (i.e. part-time attendance) and therefore requests from parents/carers will not be considered under any circumstances. Occasionally, the school might decide that a short-term part-time timetable could be beneficial and when this the case will do so with the involvement of the L.A. attendance officer and parents/carers.

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their children from school, where the children are of compulsory school age (5 years old).

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year;
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Excellent attendance will be recognised in pupils' annual reports to parents, but we are understanding that absence for genuine illness is sometimes unavoidable. We do not want children to attend school with viruses (e.g.Covid) so are cautious about rewarding or praising too heavily.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

It is important to monitor attendance to identify any patterns or frequent occurrences that need to be addressed.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

We 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.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

We will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly 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.

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

We will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families;
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in, order to modify them and inform future strategies.

### **7.4 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. As soon as severe absence is identified, we will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends;
- Involve our L.A. attendance officer and family support worker;
- 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.
- Involve our Family Support Worker and Pastoral Team to unpick underlying causes of frequent school absence and school refusal by supporting individuals and their



families. Personalised programmes of support can be put in place, including home visits, monthly family meetings and support for pupils during transition times.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day