



Be Strong and Courageous

Attendance Policy

Review frequency:	Every 3 Years
Last reviewed:	Jan 23
Agreed by Governors	Jan 26
Next review date:	Jan 26

Introduction

Children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

At St Issey School, we are committed to providing a full educational experience to all of our pupils. The governors and staff at St Issey are united in their belief that there is a relationship between the attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress. Therefore, if pupils are to benefit from education and maximise the educational opportunities available to them, then good attendance and punctuality is crucial. Ultimately, we want to help our children to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their society.

Aims

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent absence to meet set targets
- Ensure Attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2022 DfE attendance paper

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 EduReports concerns about attendance to the headteacher \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) 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 **Leadership team** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at school
- Monitoring school level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary
- Liaise with external services where necessary and appropriate

The **School Secretary** will:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the school Leadership team
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Call parents if children are absent and the reason is unknown

The **Governing Board** is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The **Class teachers** are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct register codes and submitting this information to the school office.

The **School Office staff** are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and pass absence reasons to the class teachers.

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

Strategies for Encouraging and Promoting Attendance:

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which:

- the children want to attend,
- that the school is a place where children are treated with respect and feel valued,
- a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed,
- a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diverse curriculum.

As a school, we will:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness
- Encourage parents to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build/support their child's learning
- Ensure our curriculum is relevant, exciting and that achievement is praised
- Make children aware of the importance of good attendance
- Praise and reward good attendance
- Share children's attendance record with parents at our Parents Consultation Evenings and in our annual written school report given in the Spring Term
- Meet parents/carers of children with poor attendance to see what we can do to help

The Strategic Approach to Effective Attendance


St Issey School adopts the '5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework' which is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with children and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

Aims of the 5 Foundations Strategy

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent absence to meet set targets
- Ensure Attendance is well managed within the school
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2022 DFE attendance paper

Objectives of the 5 Foundations Strategy

- create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance
- make attendance and punctuality a priority
- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues
- Demonstrate, using rewards, that the school recognises good attendance and that punctuality are achievements in themselves

 <p>Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate</p>	<p>The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.</p>
 <p>Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes</p>	<p>The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.</p>
 <p>Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development</p>	<p>The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.</p>
 <p>Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention</p>	<p>Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.</p>
 <p>Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management</p>	<p>Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.</p>

How the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice underpin the DFE 2022 Paper:

DFE Summary of Expectations	 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	 Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DFE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register and record all pupils on that register. This attendance register will be taken at the start of each day (before the first session) and again after lunch (at the start of the second session). It will mark whether pupils are present, absent, attending off site or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. The morning register will open along with the classroom doors at 8:45am. Teachers will take their register by 9am at which time the classroom doors will be closed. The afternoon register will open at 1:15 and will close by 1:30pm at which time all registers will have been submitted.

Lateness & Punctuality

The Attendance Officer, alongside members of the teaching team, will monitor the lateness of pupils as we know that being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to a child's learning and has an impact on the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time, where they are welcomed at the door by their class teacher or TA. Our school doors close at 9am. Children who arrive after 9am will be regarded as 'Late' and recorded with an 'L'. Registers will officially close at 9:15am at which point children will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised late absence).

Lateness and punctuality is monitored weekly by the Attendance Officer. If the school identifies a child with persistent late attendance, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss this further. In some cases, parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting in person.

Planned absence

Any planned absence, such as attending a medical or dental appointment must be reported to the school office either via phone or in person with as much notice as possible. These absences will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and the parent/carer has provided evidence of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of 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.

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of their child's unplanned absence and each day thereafter by 9am (or as soon as practically possible.) If the school phone is busy, then a message must be left on the school answering phone detailing the child's name and the reason for their absence. This absence will be marked 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.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- 'Couldn't get up' or 'slept in late.'
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease

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.

Following up on absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phone in the first instance. If the school has not been notified of a child's absence and any attempts at contacting parents/carers has been unsuccessful for a period of two days, the Attendance Officer may visit that child at their home address to 'Check in' and ascertain further information regarding the absence.
- If a reason has been provided for a child's absence but the school is unsatisfied with that reason and holds a concern for the child/family, then the Attendance lead may decide to visit the child at home to ascertain further information.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Approval for term time planned absence:

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Every effort should be made by parents/carers to arrange any planned absence within the 175 non-school days a year rather than during term time. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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
- 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 but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Reducing Persistent absence

The Attendance lead and school secretary meet weekly to examine the school's attendance and to identify any children who can be regarded as persistent absentees. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. In order to reduce persistent absence, the Attendance Team (as detailed above) will contact parents with a Stage 1 letter in the first instance to alert them to their child's absence record. If the absence does not improve after this, a subsequent Stage 2 letter will be sent followed by a meeting in person if required. If there is little to no improvement following this, a Stage 3 letter will be sent and a meeting arranged. At this stage, parents/carers will be asked to sign an 'Attendance Contract' to commit to improving their child's time in school. If the attendance does not show signs of improving then the case will be escalated formally.

Attendance Monitoring

At SIS the School Secretary monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. If a pupil is absent on the first day without any contact from a parent or carer, then they will phone to ascertain the reason for the absence. Any findings are then reported to the Attendance Lead in meetings which are held weekly. A child's parent or carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. The parent or carer is then expected to call the school on each subsequent day that their child is ill. We collect and store attendance data on our information management system (ARBOR) and internally use this data to:

- track the attendance of individuals
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children as being in need of intervention and support

In extreme cases the Education Welfare Service can also initiate legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their legal responsibility of getting their child consistently to school. Please see information in the 'Legal Sanctions' section for more details.

Attendance Support Map (for unplanned absence)

Everyone	Below 90% or 4 days of absence	Below 90%, little to no improvement or 7 days of absence	Below 90%, no improvement or 10 days of absence	Below 90%, little or no improvement or 13 days of absence	Below 90%, little or no improvement or 16 days of absence	Below 90%, little or no improvement or 19 days of absence
Attendance good or better and the child is punctual	Initial concerns	Serious concerns	High risk of persistent absence	Serious risk of persistent absence	No improvement and no evidence of positive change	The child is now persistently absent for the year
	Internal monitoring	Phone call/ Meeting with school	Meeting with attendance leader to review targets	All absences now require medical evidence otherwise will be unauthorised	Inform Cornwall Council Education Welfare Officer	Continue to work with EWO, Early Help and any internal support to engage the family.
	Stage 1 Letter	Stage 2 Letter	Stage 3 Letter	Formal warning for possible legal action	Open a TAC if required with EWO support	MARU referral must be considered
	Possible early interventions	Barriers to improvement discussed	Early Help involvement	Continued internal and external support	Consider referral to MARU	
		Targets for improvement put into place	Home visit considered	Multi-agency approach considered	Continue to support family through internal and external measures	
		Early Help considered if barriers require support	Attendance contract to be put into place	Review and amend contract		
Expect	Monitor	Listen & Understand	Facilitate Support	Formalise Support	Enforce	

Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence and/ or unauthorised late arrival of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. A penalty notice can be issued when a child has had a minimum of 12 sessions (6 days) or more within any 100 sessions (50 days). 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 within 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. Please see the relevant legislation, the Education Act 1996 sec.444(1) and 444(1A) for more information. 'If any child of compulsory school age is a registered pupil at a school and fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence'

Children at Risk of Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing in Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

CME includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown), and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team by making referrals.

Links with other policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND Offer
- Pupil Premium report