



Attendance Policy

Vision and Principles

At St Paul's, we believe every child deserves to feel safe, valued and included. Regular attendance is essential for children to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

We recognise that attendance difficulties can happen for a range of reasons and that some children and families may require additional support to help attendance improve successfully. Our approach combines high expectations with relational practice, early intervention and targeted support.

We believe:

- every child deserves to belong
- emotional safety supports attendance
- strong relationships improve attendance
- attendance and wellbeing are closely linked
- support and accountability work together
- every day in school matters

Our attendance procedures are underpinned by safeguarding, inclusion and relational practice.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Attendance Strategy.

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education guidance:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Education Act 1996

The school has a legal duty to:

- maintain accurate attendance records
- monitor attendance regularly
- follow up unexplained absence
- work with families to improve attendance
- involve external agencies where appropriate

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Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education and attend school regularly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure children attend school regularly and punctually
 - notify the school of absence as early as possible each day
 - provide reasons for absence
 - work in partnership with the school to improve attendance
 - attend meetings where required
 - provide medical evidence where requested
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School Staff

All staff are responsible for promoting good attendance through:

- positive relationships
 - emotionally safe classrooms
 - early identification of concerns
 - communication with families
 - monitoring attendance concerns
 - promoting belonging and engagement
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Senior Leaders

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- monitoring attendance strategically
- reviewing attendance data regularly
- identifying vulnerable groups and trends
- implementing attendance procedures
- overseeing attendance interventions
- involving external agencies where appropriate

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- reporting attendance information to governors

Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- monitoring attendance trends
- holding leaders to account
- reviewing attendance data and priorities
- ensuring statutory duties are met

Attendance Procedures

Registration

Registers are completed twice daily:

- at the start of the morning session
- at the start of the afternoon session

Children arriving after the register has closed may receive an unauthorised late mark in line with statutory guidance.

Reporting Absence and First-Day Response Procedures

Parents and carers must notify the school by 9am on each day of absence using the school's dedicated absence voicemail system.

Unless parents or carers have informed the school in advance that a child will remain absent the following day, for example due to sickness guidance such as the recommended 48-hour period following vomiting or diarrhoea, the school will continue to follow first-day response procedures each day of absence.

Daily contact will therefore continue for any child absent where the school has not received confirmation regarding ongoing absence. This helps ensure children remain safe, visible and appropriately supported.

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The school operates a robust first-day response procedure to ensure children are safe and accounted for.

Once registers have been completed:

- office staff identify children who are absent without explanation;
- vulnerable children are prioritised and contacted first;
- parents and carers are contacted by telephone;
- where necessary, second contacts are also telephoned;
- if contact cannot be established, emails and text messages may also be sent.

The Headteacher is informed of:

- vulnerable children who are absent;
- children absent without explanation;
- attendance concerns requiring further follow up.

The school recognises that poor attendance or unexplained absence may indicate wider vulnerability, unmet need or safeguarding concern. Where appropriate, safeguarding procedures may include:

- repeated contact attempts;
- liaison with external agencies;
- welfare checks;
- or, in rare circumstances, home visits to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

Where absence patterns are concerning, the school will work proactively with families and external professionals to provide early help and coordinated support.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Headteacher determines whether absences are authorised in line with Department for Education guidance.

Examples of authorised absence may include:

- genuine illness
- medical appointments
- exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher
- recognised religious observance

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Examples of unauthorised absence may include:

- term-time holidays not authorised by the Headteacher
- absence without explanation
- persistent lateness after registers close
- avoidable absence
- shopping trips or birthdays

The school may request medical evidence where:

- illness absence is frequent
- attendance patterns cause concern
- absence becomes persistent

Medical Appointments and Illness

Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside school hours.

Where this is not possible:

- evidence of appointments may be requested
- children should attend school before and/or after appointments wherever possible

The school recognises that some children may experience genuine medical difficulties affecting attendance. In these cases, the school will work supportively with families and professionals to identify appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Lateness

Punctuality is important and forms part of good attendance.

Persistent lateness can:

- disrupt learning
- impact emotional wellbeing
- reduce learning time
- affect classroom routines

Patterns of lateness are monitored and may result in attendance meetings or further intervention.

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Lateness after the register closes may be recorded as an unauthorised absence in line with statutory guidance.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Department for Education does not consider a family holiday to be an exceptional circumstance.

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Requests must:

- be submitted in advance
- include full reasons for the request

Unauthorised leave during term time may result in penalty notices being issued in line with Surrey County Council guidance.

Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Penalty notices may be issued in line with Surrey County Council and Department for Education guidance. This may include:

- unauthorised term-time absence
- repeated unauthorised absence
- persistent lateness after registers close
- ongoing attendance concerns where support and intervention have not improved attendance

Penalty notices are issued:

- per parent
- per child

This means that both parents may receive a separate penalty notice for each child where applicable.

Current national penalty notice charges are:

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First offence within a 3-year period

- £80 if paid within 21 days
- increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days

Second offence within a 3-year period

- £160 per parent, per child

Third offence within a 3-year period

- The Local Authority may proceed directly to legal intervention or prosecution rather than issuing another penalty notice

At St Paul's, our priority is always to work supportively and relationally with families to improve attendance before concerns escalate. However, where attendance does not improve despite support and intervention, legal procedures may be considered in line with Local Authority guidance.

Children Missing Education and Safeguarding

The school recognises that poor attendance and unexplained absence can be indicators of safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- investigate unexplained absence promptly
- complete welfare checks where appropriate
- work with external agencies where necessary
- make Children Missing Education referrals where appropriate

Safeguarding concerns linked to attendance will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored:

- daily

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- weekly
- termly

Leaders monitor:

- whole-school attendance
- persistent absence
- vulnerable groups
- SEND attendance
- disadvantaged attendance
- patterns and trends
- lateness

The school uses attendance information to:

- identify concerns early
- provide support and intervention
- monitor impact
- inform safeguarding and inclusion work

Attendance Strategy

St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery

Learning in God's Love

At St Paul's, we believe that every child deserves to feel safe, valued and included. Regular attendance is essential for children to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

We recognise that attendance difficulties can happen for a range of reasons and that some children and families may require additional support to help attendance improve successfully. Our approach combines high expectations with relational practice, early intervention and targeted support.

We believe:

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- every day in school matters

Our aim is always to work positively with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Our Attendance Approach

Universal Attendance Support

For All Children

We promote positive attendance through:

- warm and welcoming classrooms
 - strong relationships with children and families
 - emotionally safe environments
 - engaging learning experiences
 - clear routines and expectations
 - attendance monitoring
 - early communication with families
 - celebrating attendance and improvement
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Stage 1 — Emerging Concerns

Attendance Below 95%

What we may see

- repeated lateness
- occasional patterns of absence
- attendance beginning to decline

What we may do

- contact parents/carers
- identify possible barriers
- monitor attendance more closely
- provide pastoral support
- arrange informal meetings

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- agree short-term attendance targets
- implement trusted adult support where appropriate

Stage 2 — Attendance Concern

Attendance Below 92%

What we may see

- attendance continuing to decline
- increasing absence patterns
- reduced engagement with school
- limited improvement following Stage 1 support

What we may do

- arrange attendance meetings
- create personalised attendance support plans
- increase monitoring
- provide targeted pastoral support
- involve wider school staff where appropriate
- identify specific barriers impacting attendance
- implement short-term interventions
- review attendance regularly

Stage 3 — Persistent Absence

Attendance Below 90%

What we may see

- persistent absence
- entrenched attendance concerns
- significant absence patterns
- ongoing disengagement from school
- limited improvement despite intervention

What we may do

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- hold formal attendance meetings
- implement individual attendance plans
- involve senior leaders and wider professionals
- work alongside the Local Authority Attendance Officer
- make referrals for additional support or multi-agency involvement where appropriate
- monitor attendance weekly
- agree clear attendance expectations and targets
- provide pastoral and wellbeing support
- consider legal intervention, including penalty notices, where appropriate

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Additional Attendance Support Pathways

Some children may require more individualised attendance support.

This may include children experiencing:

- SEND needs
- anxiety or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)
- medical needs
- regulation difficulties
- family or safeguarding concerns

Support may include:

- trusted adults
- emotional check-ins
- adapted transitions
- pastoral support
- sensory or regulation support
- attendance support plans
- SEND support
- external professional involvement
- family support and multi-agency working

We understand that some attendance difficulties are complex and require a relational, supportive and graduated approach.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may sometimes be linked to anxiety, emotional distress, trauma, unmet SEND needs or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA).

Where appropriate, support may include:

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- trusted adult support;
- emotional check-ins;
- sensory and regulation support;
- adapted transitions;
- phased reintegration;
- nurture provision;
- ELSA intervention;
- family support meetings;
- multi-agency involvement.

Further guidance can be found in the school's *EBSA Guidance and Graduated Response* document.

Working Together

Strong communication between home and school is essential.

We encourage families to speak openly with us about any concerns or barriers impacting attendance so that support can be put in place as early as possible.

Our shared aim is always to ensure children:

- feel safe
- feel supported
- enjoy school
- develop confidence and belonging
- attend successfully and consistently

For support or further information regarding attendance, please contact the school office.

Date of Policy: May 2026

Review Date: May 2027

Policy Lead: Headteacher – St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery

Approved by: Headteacher and Governing Body

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