



St. Luke's School

Attendance Policy

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Governing Body Subcommittees who have been involved with the creation of this policy:

Name of Committee	
Link Governor for API – Ros Wood	May 2015

Other professionals who have been involved with the creation of this policy:

Name	Role	Date
Jo Thomas	Learning Mentor	May 2015

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement for Attendance at St Luke's School At St Luke's School we want the whole school community, governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance helps the young people in this school community to maximise their learning, achievements and aspirations.

St Luke's School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the school, parents and pupils. Each of these groups is required to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will submit annual targets to the Local Authority by 31st December each year. The Education (Local Authority Performance Targets, England) Regulations 2005 place a statutory requirement on Local Authorities to set targets and submit information to the Secretary of State, normally by 31 January each year.

The role of the School

- St Luke's School will provide a safe learning environment.
- St Luke's School will promote regular attendance and punctuality and will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- To provide pupils, parents and Governors with regular updates on attendance and punctuality.
- To supply attendance information when reporting on academic performance.
- To celebrate good attendance in assemblies and by displaying individual and class achievements.
- To engage parents, pupils and staff in projects to raise attendance levels across the school.

The role of the parent

- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary.
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details.

- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis.
- Parents are expected to follow the **Absence procedures:**

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- send a note to the Tutor group tutor on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence; ***you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.***

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- telephone again on the second or third day of absence to discover the reason for absence (***It is therefore important that telephone numbers are constantly updated by the school as soon as there is a change of number***)
- authorise the absence; authorisation of the absence is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, or Director of Access, Participation and Inclusion.
- invite you in to discuss the situation with the Leader of Pupil Development and Progress and or the Learning Mentor responsible for attendance, if absences persist
- inform you by letter if persistent absenteeism is a concern; all below 85% attendance will receive a letter each half-term; attendance figures to accompany reports
- refer the matter to the Attendance Improvement Officer if attendance moves below 85%
- support a long term absentee with gradual integration and support from the Learning Mentors

The expectations for pupils

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons
- All pupils are expected to attend all lessons
- Pupils should remember to hand in notes to their Tutor Group tutors giving reasons for absence on the first day after absence
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn

Understanding types of absence Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can

lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. The Head Teacher is the sole decision maker on these issues.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they fall below 80% attendance at any time in the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk or moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: Allocation of additional support through a Learning Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage if their child is experiencing difficulty in attending school and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Information Officer from the Local Authority. St Luke's works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AIO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices

If a pupil has at least 21 sessions (1 session = a half day) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where

permission has been denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by the LEA. A fine of £50 is issued if paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days.

Truancy

The school follows the following procedures for **post-registration truancy**

- Registers are taken at the beginning of each lesson. Any pupil who is missing should be reported instantly to reception.
- The Leader of Upper / Lower School / Director of Access, Participation and Inclusion is informed and they will then contact the Learning Mentors who will attempt to locate the missing pupil.
- If located the pupil is then taken to the Focus Room (C2 - missing from a lesson) if this is the appropriate course of action. The exception to this would be a child who is genuinely unsure of where they should be. The child is, in this case, returned to their lesson.
- Parents are informed of the truancy
- If the pupil has left the premises, staff will initially attempt to locate in the immediate vicinity.
- The local Police Station is informed if the pupil cannot be located. This is essential because of the nature of the pupils' special needs and therefore vulnerability.
- The pupil will be placed on an Attendance Report and expected to make up the work missed
- The PCSO works with the school on serious cases of repeated truancy

If a pupil fails to attend school the parent is telephoned. If it is then discovered that the parent does not know of the pupil's whereabouts as they are presumed to be in school, the pupil is classed as truancy. This is unauthorised absence.

Leaving and returning to school during the school day

If a pupil needs to leave the school during the school day the following procedures are required:

- a note from a parent or an appointment card (medical). This must be shown to the Family Group Tutor to be signed at morning registration, and subsequently the subject teacher when leaving a lesson. The pupil must also sign out at the Front Office (a health and safety must).

On returning to school the pupil must:

- sign in at the Front Office and hand in the note or appointment card

- the Front Office staff will provide this information in the event of a fire drill

Holidays in Term Time

The Head Teacher is the only person who can authorise holidays in term time. The school is not obliged to authorise holidays in term time and there is no automatic entitlement in law for time off school to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your son/daughter has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Targets for the school are available from the Learning Mentors and are displayed on the pupil notice board.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Rewards for pupils

- Pupils with high attendance (100% - 95%) will be celebrated in printed display.
- Their success will also be celebrated in assemblies and in the weekly newsletter
- A Hertfordshire CSF certificate will be awarded at the end of the Summer Term for pupils who achieve 100% during the year
- Pupils will receive prizes at the end of the year Presentation Assembly.
- Tutor Group attendance is rewarded and recognised in weekly assemblies.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Carol Morris : Director of Access, Participation and Inclusion / Assistant Headteacher

Jo Thomas : Learning Mentors

Tutor Group Tutors

These may be inspected by:

- any HMI appointed under section 1(2) or 5(2) of the Education (schools) Act 1992(a)
- any inspector registered under section 10 of that act
- in the case of a school maintained by the LA, any officer of the LA authorised for the purpose.

2. Location of Registers

There is no legal requirement as to where registers should be kept but it is preferable to keep registers in the Secretary's office once they have been used to mark in the a.m. and p.m. sessions. This saves time when 'checking' registers and is a preferable method for secretaries who may have to make amendments, additions, etc. throughout the school day.

Schools should have an allocated person who is responsible for collecting registers during an evacuation.

3. Time of Closure for Registers

Schools frequently allow an extra 10-20 minutes after official closure before returning registers to the office. Any pupil coming into school after the register closure time will be marked down as late but a child coming in after the leeway period should be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a note is given at the time. The LA recommends a 20-minute leeway period.

4. Categorising Absence

4.1 Symbols to be used in registers

From September 1st 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupils' attendance and absence.

The DfES believes that these codes are best used within the electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both Las and DfES in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- **Only the school** in the context of the law **can authorise absence**; a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class

teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.

- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Head teacher
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Head Teacher.

4.2 Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness.
- Family bereavements.
- Family holidays (up to two weeks only but also see notes below).
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

4.3 Family Holidays

Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during the school term though schools are able to exercise their discretion when granting parental requests. However, each request should be considered individually taking into account the age of the child, previous attendance patterns, parental views and the educational progress of the child. If a request is not granted and the parent takes the child on holiday, the absence should not be for more than two weeks in any school year. If the holiday goes on for longer than agreed, the extra absence should be unauthorised.

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At the request from headteachers the local authority has provided a standard letter to be handed to parents and carers to support the governing body and headteachers in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time. This is available on www.thegrid.uk

Further information and advice of school attendance including the use of the correct registration codes is available at www.education.gov.uk

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011 and 2013 is available at www.legislation.gov.uk

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at www.thegrid.uk school/ administration/pupil welfare/attendance

4.4 The use of penalty warnings and penalty notices for unauthorised holidays in term time

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two new sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures. It is particularly useful as a sanction at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched and where the Local Authority considers that a prosecution would not be appropriate as a first action.

Further information on penalty notices is available at www.thegrid.org.uk administration/pupil welfare/attendance or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

4.5 Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the LA as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final

4.6 Approved Educational Activities

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for

calculating data for the DfES absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category.

- Field trips and educational visits, both in this country and overseas.

Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- shopping trips
- holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given
- minding the house or looking after siblings
- lateness of registration if missed without explanation
- medical appointments that cannot be verified
- no reason given
- school staff have reason to believe that the note is not genuine

Further advice for unusual circumstances in DfES circular no. 10/99

APPENDIX 1 –removing from role

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to the safeguarding of all pupils. Pupils who are removed from roll inappropriately may become ‘children missing from education’. This guidance sets out the responsibilities of **all** Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools, as they relate to the removal of pupils from roll. They are all required to notify the Local Authority when removing a pupil from roll.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) places a duty on Local Authorities to establish the identity of children in their area who are not receiving education. The purpose of this duty is to ensure that children missing from education (CME) are identified quickly and tracked effectively so appropriate actions can be taken.

There are strict rules as to when schools/academies may delete pupils from their admissions register. This guidance is intended to safeguard pupils and ensure that they are removed only in accordance with the regulations. The circumstances in which a pupil may be removed from roll are explained in **Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and**

Responsibility of Schools/Academies

Notification to the Local Authority that a pupil is being removed from roll

Regulation 12(3) states that when a school/academy has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority. It is important to notify the Local Authority promptly so that any follow up action can be undertaken quickly. This reduces the risk of a pupil becoming a 'child missing from education'. It is not appropriate to wait until the end of a term for example and then notify the Local Authority of pupils who have been removed from roll during the term.

Schools/Academies should complete the **Removal from Roll form (copy at the end of this document)** and return it to their local double district Attendance Team within 5 school days of the date of removal from roll. This includes pupils who have been added to the roll but who have never attended.

It is not necessary to complete a form when a pupil is leaving at the end of statutory education or on transition to another phase - eg infant to junior or primary to secondary.

Whenever a pupil joins or leaves a school/academy a Common Transfer File (CTF) MUST accompany him or her. Further information on the transfer of a CTF can be found on www.teachernet.gov.uk and www.education.gov.uk or http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/data_collection/ctf.shtml

Circumstances in which a pupil may be removed from roll

The circumstances in which a pupil of compulsory school age may be removed from the admission roll are prescribed by regulation 8. (It is illegal to remove a pupil's name from the admission roll unless one of these circumstances applies, even if a parent requests it).

A new school is named on a School Attendance Order (regulation 8a)

If a pupil is the subject of a School Attendance Order their name may only be removed from roll if the order is revoked or the school named in the order is changed.

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil is registered at another school in England or Wales (regulation 8b)

If a parent has notified the school/academy that the pupil will be transferring to a new school/academy and has provided the name and address:

- The school/academy should check with the new school/academy that the pupil is registered with them/has an expected start date.
- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their expected final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Elective Home Education (regulation 8d)

If the school/academy receives written notification from a parent of their intention to Electively Home Educate, the pupil's name must be removed from roll. ***Please note that this does not apply to special schools where permission is needed from the Local Authority or from the Secretary of State before a pupil's name may be removed.***

Schools/academies should not encourage parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding exclusion or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. Advice and information on Elective Home Education can be obtained from the local Attendance Team, or from www.hertsdirect.gov.uk or from a number of websites including www.education-otherwise.org

On receipt of written notification from the parent the school/academy must:

- Remove the pupil from roll at the end of their expected final day
- Send the Removal from Roll form together with a copy of the parent's letter which states their intention to Electively Home Educate to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days.

Pupil has moved out of Hertfordshire but within England and Wales (regulation 8e)

If a parent relocates and provides the school/academy with their new address but has not yet secured a new school/academy place for their child:

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil has moved abroad – outside England and Wales (regulation 8e)

If a pupil moves abroad and their new school and or address is unknown.

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day

- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil has moved, has ceased to attend and the new address is not within reasonable distance of the school/academy (regulation 8e)

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil has failed to return after being granted leave of absence for exceptional circumstances in accordance with regulation 7(1A) (regulation 8f)

A pupil's name may only be removed from roll after 10 school days have elapsed following the agreed date of return and once the school/academy **and** the local authority have made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts. Schools/academies should:

- Make contact with parents/ relatives to check that there is no good reason for the absence eg disrupted travel arrangements or illness
- Mark the absence as authorised if there is a valid reason, using the relevant code
- Mark the absence as unauthorised if there is not a valid reason, using the relevant code
- Contact their relevant Attendance team if there are concerns about the welfare of the pupil or if they are unable to make contact with the parents

The Attendance team will assist the school/academy in making reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts.

Once the school/academy and the local authority have completed their enquiries and 10 school days have elapsed the school/academy should:

- Remove the pupil from roll with effect from 10 school days after the expected date of return
- Send a Removal from Roll form to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days.

Pupil is medically unfit and is likely to remain so beyond compulsory school age (regulation 8g)

A pupil may only be removed from roll on medical grounds if he/she has been **certified** by the school's/academy's Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age **and** the pupil does not intend to continue at the school/academy beyond compulsory school age.

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil whose whereabouts are unknown (regulation 8h)

If a pupil leaves a school/academy without the parent providing a new address or new school details the pupil may **not** be removed from roll until **both** the school/academy and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil.

- The school/academy should contact their allocated Attendance Improvement Officer, or their local Attendance Manager who will work with the school/academy to try to locate the pupil.
- If, after four weeks, all enquiries have failed to locate the pupil, the school/academy should remove the pupil's name from roll, complete the Removal from Roll form and send it to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days.

Pupil is in custody (regulation 8i)

A pupil may be removed from roll if serving a custodial sentence of four months or longer and the head teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return at the end of that period. This decision should be made in consultation with the relevant Targeted Youth Support Team

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Pupil has died (regulation 8j)

A pupil who has died may only be removed from roll once official notification has been received. This would usually come from the pupil's parents but may come from another source, eg relatives or police.

- The pupil should be removed from roll using the date of death as the removal date
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days
- No CTF is required

Pupil has been permanently excluded (regulation 8m)

The pupil may only be removed from roll once any appeals process has been concluded.

- The pupil should be removed from roll using the school day after the conclusion of any appeals process as the date of removal from roll
- If no appeal has been lodged within 15 school days the pupil may be removed from roll on the 16th school day following the exclusion
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days
- No CTF is required

Non payment of fees – boarding pupils (2011 amendment, regulation 8o)

Where the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or academy and the charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent and the charges are outstanding at the end of the school term to which they relate, the pupil may be removed from roll.

- The pupil should be removed from roll at the end of the relevant term
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within 5 school days

Revised February 2009

Revised 2010

Revised 2012

Revised 2015