

ST LEONARD'S CE (VC) FIRST SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

St Leonard's CE (VC) First School believes that promoting excellent attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the parents, pupils, school staff and Governors. Regular attendance and good punctuality is important for the success of all our children. There is a strong statistical link between attendance, punctuality and attainment in pupils. Children with excellent attendance and punctuality levels tend to have high levels of attainment. Children with low levels of attendance and punctuality tend to have low levels of attainment.

St Leonard's CE (VC) First School will promote excellent attendance and punctuality through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and punctuality by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence or lateness is avoidable.

At St Leonard's CE (VC) First School we understand that some children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance or punctuality are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or lateness and give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance or punctuality does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence or lateness from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

St Leonard's CE (VC) First School has a duty in law to refer to the Local Authority any absence causing concern within a 12 month period. Furthermore where the school has been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about irregular absences or patterns in lateness they also have a duty to refer concerns to the Local Authority.

St Leonard's CE (VC) First School is required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable reason like illness.

Issuing of Penalty Notices

Excerpt from Staffordshire County Council letter to parents 23.3.2015

Penalty Notice for leave of absence in term time -

*Previously our approach was to only issue a Penalty Notice if the pupil's overall attendance was below 87%. This threshold has now been removed.

*Previously only one Penalty Notice per pupil was issued within an academic year. This limit has been removed so more than one Penalty Notice could be issued for repeated absence without permission during term time.

*Previously pupils missing 10 sessions or five days taken together risked a Penalty Notice. Now a combined total of ten sessions (not necessarily grouped as 5 consecutive days) could trigger a Penalty Notice.

*Instead of monitoring and totalling holiday absences taken across each academic year, they will now be monitored across the previous three terms, regardless of academic year.

Penalty Notice for persistent absence -

*Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Local Support Team from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the LST 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.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures which reflect the LA and DfE strategy for behaviour and attendance. The strategy will be used in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

Illness – a parent must notice the school before 9.30a.m. giving the reason for the illness. If the school has concerns about the absence they will request evidence. This evidence could be a prescription or an appointment card.

Holidays – Holidays are **not** granted in school term. A letter addressed to the Headteacher should be submitted for leave due to **exceptional** circumstances.

Medical/Dental appointments – Medical appointments should be made, if possible, for out of school hours. Appointments during school time should only be for emergencies. An appointment card should be shown to the school office.

Religious Observance – Advance notice of any day set aside by the child's religious body for exclusive religious observance should be given in writing by the parent. If the religious body has not set the day apart, the absence will not be approved.

Lateness – All children should be in school by 8:50a.m. Registration begins at 9a.m. Children arriving after 9:30a.m. will be given a later mark. Parents will be asked to give a reason for their child lateness and may be asked to discuss lateness with the Headteacher. Lateness after the register closes (9.30am.) will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

In the event of a child's exclusion:

The school will provide work daily. The work can be collected from the school office.

The school will notify the Local Support Team if a child has 10 or more non-consecutive unauthorised absences or there is a pattern of irregular absences or there is a pattern of irregular absences or lateness's occurring.

Penalty Notices will be issued for unauthorised holidays.

A parent may be asked to enter into a Parental Contract if their child has persistent absence.

When an individual pupil's attendance causes concern in any 12 month period, a referral to the Local Support Team will be made by the school. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, dentist, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for hospital appointments which must be in school time.






Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Attendance 2013/2014	96%
Attendance 2014/2015	96%
Attendance 2015/2016	96%

If a child is not in school by 9:30a.m. and a parent has not given the reason for absence by 9:30a.m, the school will phone / text, for an explanation for the absence. By contacting the parent, the school also ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school, enabling the parent where necessary, to establish their child is safe.

Attendance will be analysed termly or sooner if required, children with 100% attendance per term will receive a certificate at the end of term. Each term children will bring home a letter detailing their attendance. The letter is colour coded dependent on the attendance percentage:

	Less than 80%
	80% - 84%
	85% - 91%
	92% - 94%
	95% - 100%

The colour coded letter system is in line with all of the schools in the Wolgarston Collaboration. The school will take part in the termly Wolgarston Collaboration of schools 'Attendance Spotlight'. These weeks will, where possible, be supported by the schools Local support Team member.

Those people responsible for attendance and punctuality matters in this school are:

Class Teacher

- To mark attendance at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To ensure the correct attendance or absence code is given for each child
- To update the register until 9:00a.m.
- To provide pastoral care where attendance is linked to behaviour policy and/or bullying

Support Staff

- Under the instruction of the class teacher, mark attendance in the register, ensure correct attendance or absence code is given and update the register until 9.00a.m.
- To provide pastoral care where attendance is linked to behaviour and/or bullying

Office Staff

- To close the register at 9:30a.m.
- To contact the parent of any child absent without notice as soon as possible after 9:30am.
- To make attendance and absence data available to the Local Support Team and Local Authority
- To contact the Local Support Team if a child has 10 consecutive unauthorised absences or there is a pattern of irregular absences occurring

Headteacher

- To monitor whole school and individual attendance and absence
- To take appropriate action for holiday requests and absences
- To keep Governors informed of attendance and absences by percentage
- To support Governors in their target setting for attendance
- To provide pastoral care where attendance is linked to behaviour and/or bullying

Governors

- To ensure that the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is reviewed annually
- To keep informed of the schools current attendance in percentage
- To set attendance targets

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance and punctuality. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.