

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Attendance (Pupils) Policy and Penalty Notices Information

This document is a statement of the philosophy and strategies for attendance at St Lawrence Junior School.

The staff of St Lawrence Junior School is committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors and the LA, to building a school which serves the community, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from 100% school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance, and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher, Head of Year or Headteacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- encourage 100% school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- notify the school immediately of any change to contact details
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- contact the school office when a child is absent by 9.30am. The school office can also be emailed on admin@stlawrence-junior.surrey.sch.uk. If you do email please include the child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage good attendance and punctuality
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- the home school link worker working with the attached Inclusion Officer, may follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Inclusion Officer

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for students where no reason has been provided or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site activities
- Most types of dual registration

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in **exceptional** circumstances, for example for compassionate reasons.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an **Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form** must, wherever possible, be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. This form can be found on the school website or obtained from the school office. The headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request. In reaching a decision the following factors may be taken into account:

- the child's record of attendance for the current academic year is not below 100%
- that the Application for Leave of Absence does not exceed a maximum of ten school days in any one year (apart from in very exceptional circumstances in which case the request would be notified to the Governing Body for their consideration)
- the timing of the leave of absence, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any assessments, examinations or school events

Please note:

- *any requests for children in Year 6 during the SAT's period will not be authorised*
- an Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances will not be considered if a request has already been authorised in that academic year (even if the authorised request was only for one day)

Family holidays

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates. St Lawrence Junior School will not authorise holidays during term time.

Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours to the school premises. We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children and staff in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Thank you for your understanding with this. Further guidance on infection control may be found on the [Public Health England website](#).

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school, a form for this purpose can be collected from the school office. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Performances

Leave of absence in order for a child to act in a stage or film performance, or attend a modelling assignment or similar, is at the Headteacher's discretion. Three days per year will normally be permitted if the child's record of attendance is 100% to that point, and the timing of the leave does not prevent the child attending examinations or assessments.

Encouraging Attendance

St Lawrence Junior School encourages full attendance in the following ways,

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see Lateness).
- by publishing attendance statistics
- by celebrating good attendance
- certificates are awarded to celebrate good attendance
- the Head and SBM are responsible for monitoring attendance. They will liaise closely with the SLT, the school senior admin assistant, the school attendance governor, the Inclusion Officer and where appropriate the School's Home Link Worker.
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- by if necessary arranging meetings with parents/carers
- by referring the families to the attached Inclusion Officer if the irregular attendance continues

Punctuality and Lateness

Please note that, if pupils arrive at school after 8.55am a late mark will be recorded and if a child arrives after 9.10am it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register, without a valid explanation, the lateness will be recorded in the class register as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by St Lawrence, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone.
- if there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.
- if, by the end of the second day (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their concerns and the reasons for the absence.
- parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached Inclusion Officer
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Officer may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution
- any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received in writing:

- the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. The Pupil Tracking Office at County Hall will also be sent appropriate information within ten days of anyone leaving or joining the school. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by the Inclusion Service.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and the School Attendance Lead

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- ensure that all absences are coded correctly in line with DfE guidance
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the Inclusion Service (unless there is a justifiable cause for concern when contact is required speedily, in which case immediate referral to the Inclusion Service may be necessary)
- ensure that key office staff have dedicated and protected time for liaison and follow up work with the attached Inclusion Officer
- consult and liaise closely with the attached Inclusion Officer on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- to work in close collaboration with the attached Inclusion Officer during their termly/half termly register analysis ensuring agreed action is carried out
- to set whole school attendance targets.
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the attached Inclusion Officer

Support Staff

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- to consult and liaise closely with the attached Inclusion Officer regularly
- to share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance with the Headteacher and attached Inclusion Officer

Teaching Staff

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the Headteacher
- to record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register
- to inform the Headteacher of concerns
- to be alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report them to the office staff or Headteacher
- to ensure children complete personal attendance records and receive rewards as appropriate

Penalty Notice Information for Parents

Information is available in Appendix 1, and also on the school website:

Advice and support is available from an Inclusion Officer by contacting the local Education Office as follows:

North East – Tel 01372 833588

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