

St Luke's C.E First School

Short Parental Attendance Policy and Procedures



Policy Author:	Sally Baker
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Key Contacts

School Attendance Lead: Sally Baker
Telephone number: 01527 541219
Email: head@stlukesfirst.worcs.sch.uk

School Administrator: Emma Bird
Telephone number: 01527 541219
Email: admin@slf.endeavourschools.org

SENCO: Helen Broughton
Telephone number: 01527 541 219
Email: hbroughton@slf.endeavourschools.org

Governor for attendance: Lisa Brough
Telephone number: 01527 541219
Email: lbrough@slf.endeavourschools.org

At St Luke's C of E First School, we want all students to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils want to be is important to us. We will work together with you as parents to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil's all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	...a pupil will miss this many days:	...and this many lessons:
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer as soon as possible after 8:50am on the morning of the first day on unexplained absence in order to ascertain the reason the child is not in school. If school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we regard it as a safeguarding concern. We may therefore undertake a home visit to ensure the child is safe and well.

Once we have ascertained the reason for absence, we will be able to identify whether or not this is an approved/authorised absence or not. We will:

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If the child is absent for 10 days or more we are required to notify Worcestershire Children's First that a child is missing in education (CME) via the Children's Services

Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence will be unauthorised if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)
- If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Support for School Attendance

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

Please speak to your child's class teacher and/or Mrs Baker (Headteacher and Attendance Lead) if you are experiencing difficulties around attendance.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being.