



**St Stephen's**

CE Primary School

# **Promoting Good Attendance at St Stephen's CE Primary School**

This model policy is based on the DfE's ['Working together to improve attendance'](#) guidance (May 2022). The policy will need to be personalised to reflect each school's culture and procedures to promote positive attendance. The policy also references Ofsted's report (February 2022) ['Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence.'](#)

**Date: September 2023**

**Signed:**

**Date of Review: September 2024**

## School's theologically-rooted Christian Vision

Our vision is about celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and experiencing life in all its fullness. It is rooted in John 13:34:

***“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”***

Our school will be a place where:

- everyone feels safe, welcome and valued.
- everyone feels excitement, joy and challenge through developing their God-given gifts to achieve.
- everyone flourishes and excels, grows in character, faith and wisdom and develops hope and aspiration.
- everyone is equipped to move on in their journey with confidence, resilience and motivation.
- In partnership with others we seek to serve and make a valuable contribution to God's world.

***Learning, loving and growing; together as God's children.***

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At St Stephen's CE Primary School we expect all pupils to:
  - Attend every school day
  - Attend school punctually
  - Attend school prepared for the day
- 1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
- 1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- 1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance' which applies from September 2022.
- 1.5 Our approach to securing good attendance, in line with Ofsted's research, can be summarised as '*Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.*'

- 1.6 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- 1.7 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see [‘How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster’](#)
- 1.8 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- 1.9 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.
- 1.10 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the 1996 Education Act.

## **2 Expectations**

- 2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.
- 2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is Mrs Jane Parsons.
- 2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day to day basis are and Mrs Rachael Miller and Mrs Joanne Mason.
- 2.4 Staff who can provide support on attendance are Mrs Sally Denney and Mrs Liz Taylor.
- 2.5 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.6 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
  - Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. This should be followed up with a written note as soon as possible
  - Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.

- Provide a medical note (where attendance is a concern) to authorise any further absences.
- Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
- Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

2.7 We expect all our **pupils** to:

- Be aware of when they should attend school
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

### **3 Daily routines**

3.1 At St Stephen's CE Primary School our staff meet and greet our pupils each day. This starts when pupils begin their slow start to the day at 8:45am as they are met by members of SLT. Pupils are then greeted by their class teachers and assistants when they arrive in school and complete their wellbeing scale.

3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.

3.3 Our school day begins at 8.55am. The morning register will open and be taken 8.55am by the classteacher. Any pupil arriving after 8.55am is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness, this is due to the gate being locked.

3.4 If arrival is before 9.00am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register) this will be recorded on Integriss.

3.5 The school register will officially close at 9.30am. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register) this will be recorded as a U code on Integriss.

3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance

3.7 Our afternoon session begins at 12:30pm for EYFS, 12:45am for KS1, 1:00pm for LKS2 and 1:15pm for UKS2. A register is taken at this time.

3.8 Our normal school day ends at 3.30pm.

#### **4 Reporting Absence**

4.1 If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school office by telephone or email on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

4.2 If the absence continues, parents should contact the school office **each day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:

- Activate first day calling procedures after the register is closed at 9.30am.
- If there remains no contact then a further telephone call will be made later that morning to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts
- If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil then, a home visit may be carried out. If the family is supported by a social worker then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.

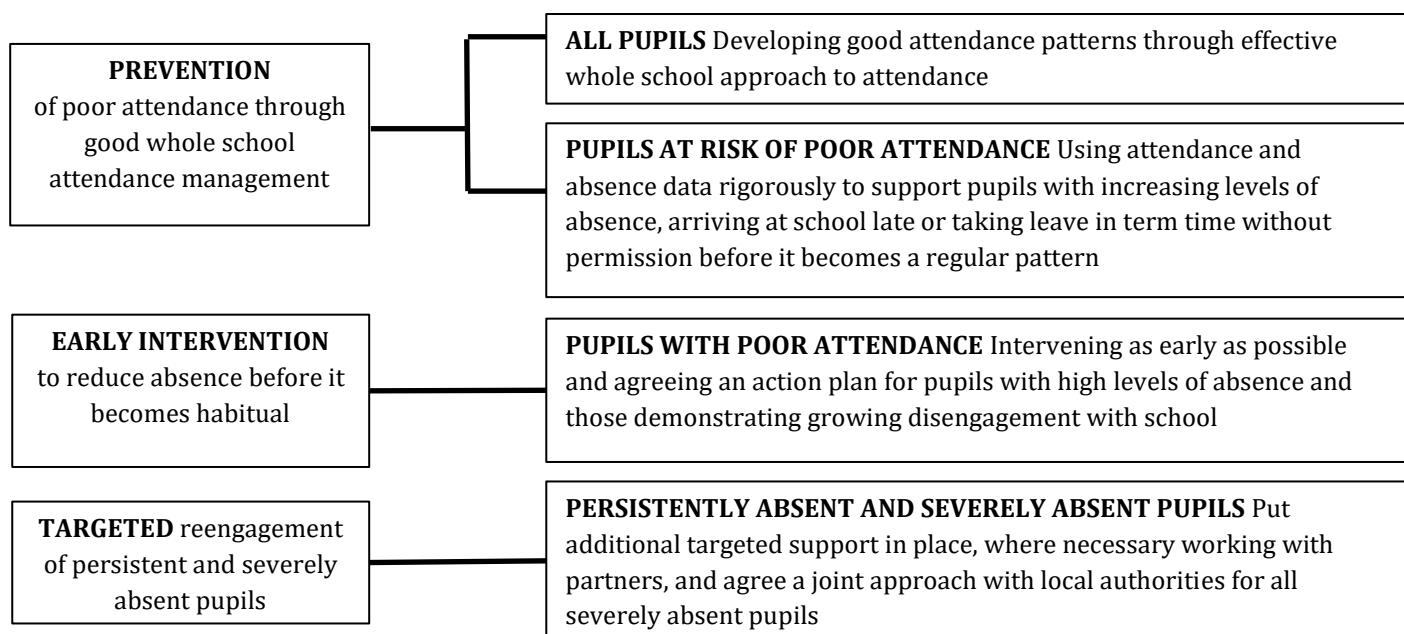
4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission.

#### **5. Requesting leave of absence**

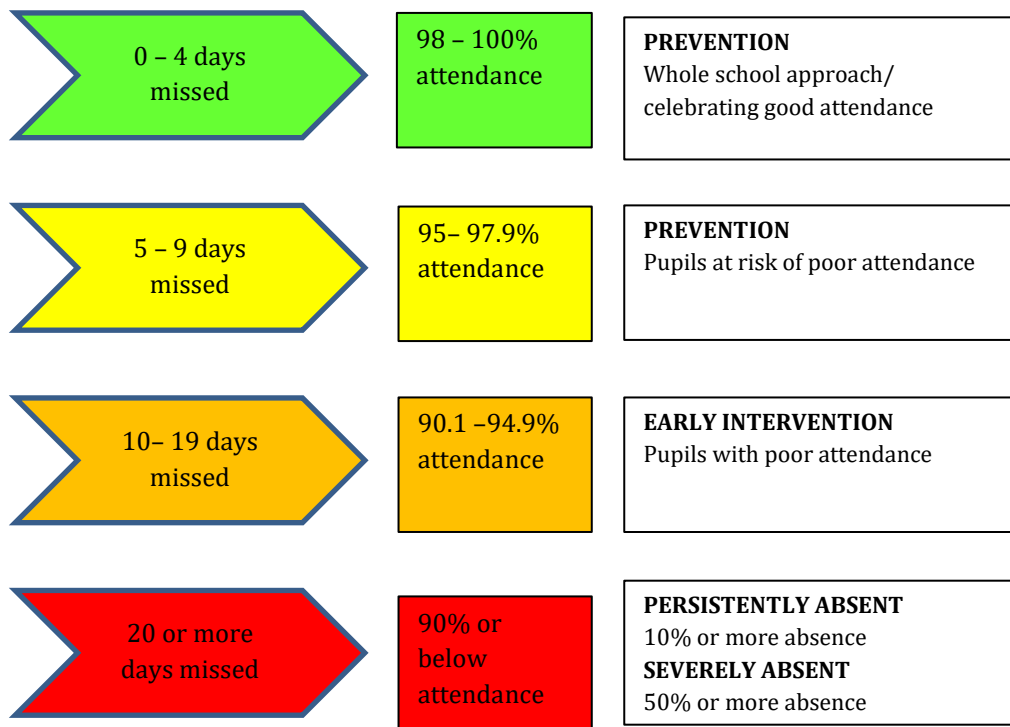
5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible.

## 6 Managing Attendance

- 6.1 We will regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning. This will be done termly or more frequently through letters if it is of concern.
- 6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the following to promote and celebrate good attendance:  
-weekly attendance winners in celebration worship
- 6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 6.4 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.
- 6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absence or severely absent.



- 6.5 Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing persistent absence (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions) and severe absence (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions) is based on the table below:



- 6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support. We will focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- 6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil’s attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.
- 6.8 We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support. Where relevant, the support would involve following the Emotionally Based School Avoidance pathway.
- 6.9 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.



- 6.10 We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school. This will include pupils who are classed as being persistently absent (10% or more absence), those who are severely absent (50% or more absence), those with patterns of absence and pupils who show an unexpected or unexplained dip in attendance.
- 6.11 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- 6.12 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- 6.13 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- 6.14 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

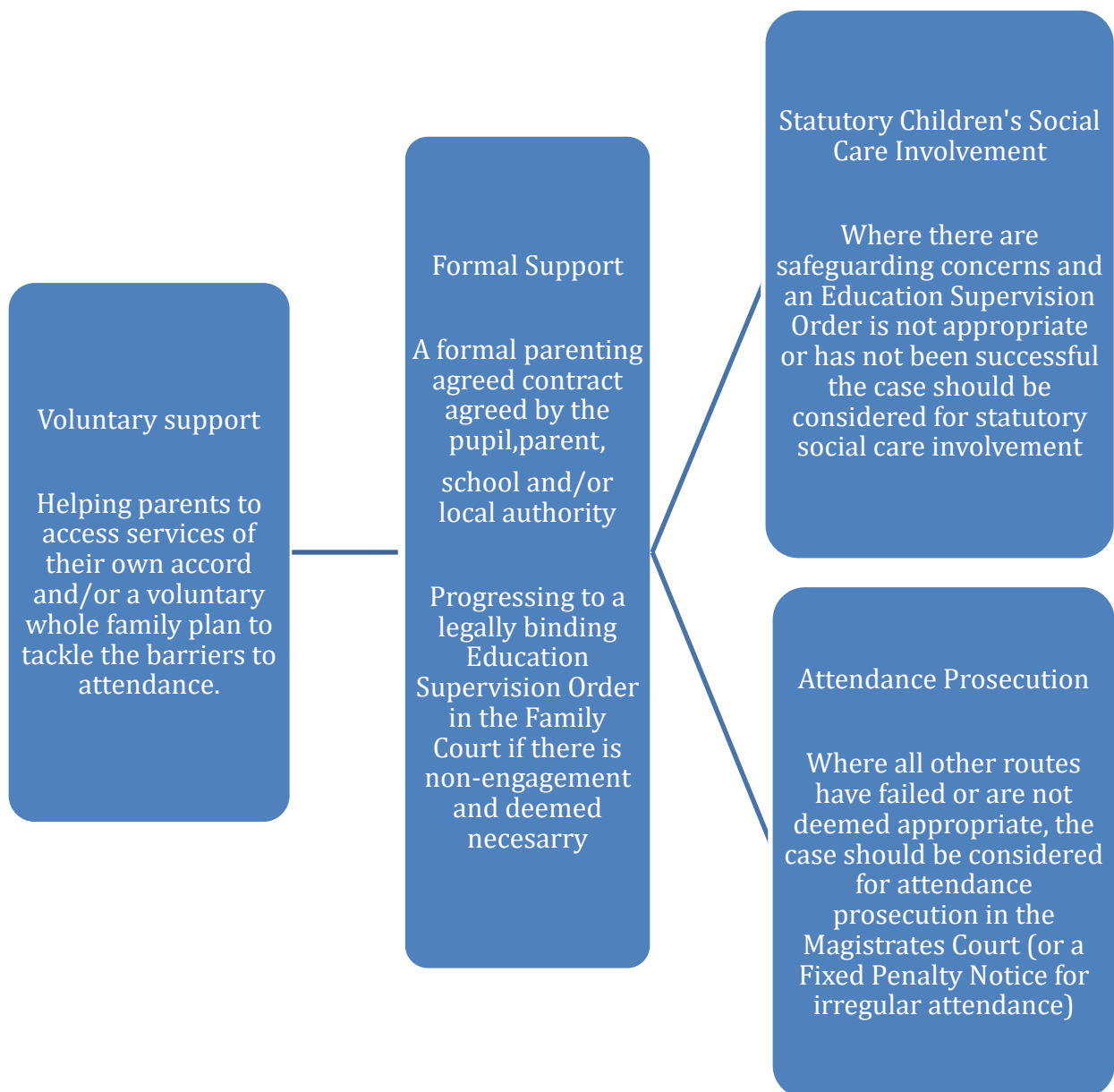
## **7. Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action**

7.1 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/ or has a social worker
- Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school
- Attendance panels
- Attendance support plans
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- Personal, social and health education
- Anxiety-based school avoidance resources
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Early help referral options
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages

7.2 Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centred, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.3 Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



- 7.4 We will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are:
- Parenting contracts
  - Education supervision orders
  - Attendance prosecution
  - Parenting orders
  - Fixed penalty notices (see section 8)
- 7.5 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

## **8 Fixed penalty notices**

- 8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.
- 8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 8.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

**Appendix 1 Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance**

