



# St Faith's

Church of England  
Infant and Nursery School



"Our inclusive St Faith's family strives to enable all to achieve their full potential and inspire a community of hope and friendship. We seek excellence by ensuring a safe, respectful and flourishing learning community, where differences are celebrated and our genuine love and high expectations make a difference to all."

*Oscar Romero .... "Aspire not to have more, but to be more."*

## Attendance Policy

As a Church School, the distinctive Christian values of respect, compassion, trust, justice, friendship and community are promoted through the experiences we offer to all our pupils, to give pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding that they require to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. We promote the teaching and understanding of fundamental British values in order to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We positively teach the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. Teaching the fundamental British values helps the children to become informed, active and responsible citizens.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of **Attendance** in our school. It reflects the consensus of opinion of all members of staff. It is based on current practice and has the full agreement of the governing body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher, teaching staff and support staff. It is our collective responsibility to raise awareness and that all policies are known, understood and used in an appropriate way.

## Introduction

St Faith's Church of England Infant and Nursery School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The staff and governors believe that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end, the school will work with parents to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible. The school also recognises that attendance falls within our safeguarding responsibilities.

## Aims

*We recognise that...*

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of the opportunity to access this education.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Some parents may need the support of the school in order to meet their attendance obligations.
- Situations beyond the control of the pupils and parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of the parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- Most children want to attend school to learn, socialise and prepare themselves for their future role in society.

As stated in the document Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) "Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families."

We will aim to achieve this by:

- Expect: aspiring to high standards, building a culture where we all want to be in school and ready to learn. We aim for all children to have good attendance, over 95%.

- Monitor: rigorously using attendance data to identify patterns for individuals and groups in aim to resolve any difficulties.
- Listen and understand: working with our families.
- Facilitate support: attempting to remove barriers to improve attendance for all.
- Formalise support
- Enforce: where all other avenues have been exhausted. This will be in line with statutory guidance.

### **Leadership and Management**

**Our designated attendance champion is Miss Lisa Wright, our Deputy Head. She is supported in this role by the Headteacher, Senior Leadership team and our Administrator. Our champion has the overall responsibility for improving attendance. She can be contacted via email, [lisa.wright@st-faiths.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:lisa.wright@st-faiths.lincs.sch.uk).**

As a leadership team we ensure:

- We have a clear vision and high expectations regarding attendance and this is communicated to and understood by all staff and all families.
- Through our safeguarding training, staff are made aware that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk.
- We expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of our St Faith's family.
- We convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- We recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement and have effective systems in place for monitoring this.
- Our governors have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures, as appropriate.

### **Relationships and communication**

We pride ourselves on the effective and supportive relationships we aim to build with all staff, children and families in order to secure trust and engagement. All communication is open and supportive, ensuring that everyone understands the expectations and the school procedures with regards to attendance. We aim to support all of our families, treating them with respect at all times, whilst ensuring that they understand the importance of attending school regularly. This effective communication extends as we liaise with other agencies working with our families to support attendance, a social worker for example.

### **Expectations**

Children should (with support from their families):

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them attending school.

Parents should:

- Treat all staff with respect and actively support the work of the school in improving attendance for all.
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Ensure their child arrives on time for school each day.
- Be open and honest when reporting absences to the school.
- Talk to the staff team and ask for any help whenever it is needed.
- Contact the school immediately, whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Communicate with the school and notify us as early as possible circumstances they may affect absences or require support.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- Where possible, book any medical appointments around the school day.
- Attend Progress Evenings to discuss their child's progress and talk to staff if there are any problems or changes of family circumstances which may affect the child.

- Work with the school to help us to understand any barriers to attendance and proactively engage with the support offered to improve attendance.

The school will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes good attendance
- Continually strive to improve attendance for all children
- Ensure clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve on in place. All systems will be inclusive for all of our families.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers, including having a robust daily process to follow up absence
- Proactively use data to monitor attendance for groups and individuals and work with families to understand and address barriers to attendance in a supportive way. This may include signposting families to further support when the barriers are out of school and the school will play an active role in multi-agency work to support this.
- If a child fails to attend school and no notification as to the reason for the absence is received, the school will telephone the parents once the registers are closed.
- Offer immediate and confidential support and action, on any problem notified to us.
- Ensure our nurture lead Mrs Simpson is available to talk to families and offer support as needed and overcome together any barriers to attendance.
- Monitor closely the impact of interventions and support, making adjustments as necessary and use these outcomes to inform future strategy.
- Hold more formal conversations where there is a lack of engagement from a family whose child is persistently absent from school. This may include working with other schools where siblings may attend.
- Raise any safeguarding concerns following school policy.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance for all children including those with SEND, working with children and their families to maximise attendance.
- Inform a child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences or concerns.
- Liaise with the local authority where intervention and support has not resulted in improvements to attendance.

### **Encouraging Attendance through Good Practice and Rewards**

*Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:*

- Accurate completion of the register at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the school day.
- Early identification and support of pupils and parents experiencing difficulties with attendance e.g. providing a taxi, collecting the child from home.
- Rewarding classes with certificates for the best attendance each week.
- Rewarding the class with the best attendance for the term, with a special treat.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance and Poor Attendance**

- We aim for all children to have an attendance of over 95%, however that understand that sometimes children get ill and may need to be absent from school.
- Levels of absence are recorded according to the following criteria:

95% +	Good attendance
90-95%	At risk of persistent absence
80-90%	Persistent absent
50-80%	At risk of severe absence
50% -	Severe absence

- Attendance is closely monitored by the school each week.
- When a child is absent from school, the office staff will call parents if we have not been contacted regarding why they are absent.

- Data is closely monitored each week and reviewed half termly and the parents of any child whose attendance falls below 95% and 90% over a half term, without a reasonable explanation, will be notified of the school's concern by letter. This will also be discussed with the class teacher during our termly progress meetings.
- If a child's attendance drops below 90% and they become a persistent absentee a letter will be sent in the first instance and this child will be monitored closely. If we see no or very little improvement, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter with the Headteacher, Deputy Head and/or Nurture Team. Attendance will then be monitored during the next period. At the meeting, support will be offered, and attendance targets will be set for the next period and a plan of support agreed to help the parents and pupil improve attendance. Attendance will then be closely monitored.
- If a child's attendance falls below 80% and the child is then at risk of severe attendance, parents will be invited to attend a meeting where actions and targets alongside support are put in place. This will be recorded and agreed with the parents and another review meeting set in 6 weeks' time. This will consider the success of the support in place, if there has been any improvement in the attendance and set future targets and actions accordingly. Support, guidance and an Early Help, as appropriate will be offered for families to improve attendance. Following a third meeting, if no improvements are evident, we will action an Early Help Assessment so that all professionals can be involved. In consultation with parents, further action with the support of the local authority will be taken.
- If a child is absent for 10 consecutive days, then they will be reported to the local authority as a pupil not attending regularly (PNAR) and if no contact can be made with the family as a Child Missing Education (CME).
- At this stage evidence of medical issues will be requested and without this, absences will be recorded as unauthorised. We will also liaise closely with other professionals, as stated in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance document 2022, school attendance is the responsibility of all professionals.
- Where improvements are still not being made, despite our best efforts (attendance meetings, daily communication, safe and well checks, support offered) a formal Attendance Panel meeting will be held with the family, head teacher, attendance champion and our attendance governor or chair of governors. During this meeting stakeholders present will clearly agree the next course of action and the timescale for this. This will be reviewed within 6 weeks and if no significant improvements are made legal proceedings will begin and a fixed penalty notice issued.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition, specific responsibilities are allocated to individual members of staff as follows:

#### **Attendance Champion / Headteacher**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of attendance across the school and of the Attendance Policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To liaise with the Nurture Lead and Safeguarding/Attendance Governor.
- To maintain an up-to-date attendance tracking file. Attendance is tracked both weekly and half-termly.
- To deliver clear messages about expectations and routines and consequences.
- To reinforce routines and expectations through a physical presence at the start and the end of the school day where possible.
- To ensure the website is kept up to date with the latest policy and relevant information, and that this goes out to all families at least annually.

#### **Class Teachers**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform the Headteacher of any concerns regarding absence.
- To communicate effectively with families and administrators when discussing reasons for absence.

#### **Administrator**

- To liaise with the Attendance Champion / Headteacher daily as required and weekly.

- Send regular attendance breakdowns to parents notifying them of current attendance, in percentage, in discussion with the Attendance Champion
- Telephone parents at the close of registers when notification for absence has not been received.
- To liaise with the Attendance team and Nurture lead.

### **Lateness**

The school encourages pupils to arrive on time to ensure a prompt start to lessons. Pupils should arrive at school by the time the classroom doors are closed. Times for each class may differ during a pandemic. Any pupil arriving after the gate has closed will be asked to enter through the Office door. Parents sign their child in and state the reason why they are late. The register will be marked with an 'L' to record the late arrival. Registers close at 9.30 am. When a child arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with an unauthorised absence for that session with a letter 'U' to show they are on site. In the event of bad weather or under exceptional circumstances e.g. news of a traffic accident, registers will remain open for a longer period.

If a child is identified as being late, through our rigorous monitoring, on a regular or a frequent basis, actions of support will be taken to support the family. We recognise that starting the day on time is vital to the child's wellbeing and progress in school.

### **Authorised and 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 - I
- Family bereavements - C
- Family Holiday (see notes below) – H (if authorised) G (if unauthorised)
- Medical and dental appointments - M
- Days of religious observances - R
- Fixed term exclusions – E
- Not in school due to a part-time table or nursery session - X
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated

### **Family Holidays and Other Reasons for Absence**

In line with the DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024)

'All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.'

Therefore, it is clear that Headteachers may **NOT** grant leave of absence during Term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Visiting a new school prior to transition
- Being on a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable. This is when the child is of compulsory school age, and both the family and the school have agreed that the child should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Another exceptional circumstance at the school's discretion. This must be requested in advance by the parent the child normally lives with. Each application is then treated individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. These may include a parent getting married or a family funeral or to participate in an agreed sporting event for example.

Parents will therefore **not** be able to request leave of absence for a family holiday, unless they can demonstrate that there are **exceptional circumstances** involved with this. Where a parent or carer feels there are exceptional circumstances, requests for authorised holidays must be made in advance in writing to the Headteacher for consideration. The DfE does

not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

If leave is not authorised, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. See Fixed Penalty Notices section below.

### **Penalty Notices**

When a child's attendance become severe or at risk of being severe and targeted support meetings and multi-disciplinary support for families are found to be ineffective in approving attendance further action will be taken. These will be in collaboration with the School Attendance Support Team and statutory children's social care services as appropriate and where all other actions have been exhausted.

Legal action will also be taken for an unauthorised holidays during term time, when voluntary support options are not appropriate. Without authorised permissions for leave from the school, you may be fined if the children is absent for 5 consecutive days or longer. This fine will be per parent, per child and will be in line with the latest guidance from the DfE.

Where there is a request for a term-time holiday, and it is refused by the school because it does not meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' the school will issue a letter in response to the application. This will detail that the application has been refused and will confirm to the parent that if the child or children are not in school on the days requested, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It will advise the parent that following this the school will need to request a fixed penalty notice from the local authority.

Where a family does not apply for a holiday absence and evidence suggests that the child's absence was due to a holiday and for 5 or more consecutive days, the school will request a meeting with the family and a penalty notice may still be requested.

For more information, please see:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)

### **Safeguarding procedures**

At St Faith's we have a positive culture of safeguarding, with effective policies and procedures in place. Our safeguarding procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on our website <https://stfaithscofe.secure-primarysite.net/safeguarding-information-and-policies/>.

Approved by the governing body on:	September 2024
Signed (Chair of Governors)	Dave Vincent
Signed (Attendance Champion)	Lisa Wright
Signed (Headteacher)	Amanda Konrath
Review Date	September 2025

**Appendix 1**  
**Procedures and Responsibilities**

**Ladder of Escalation**

Scenario	Parent/carer responsibility	School responsibility
Child will be late for school	Call school immediately and at least before 9.30am, stating the reason for the absence. On arrival, go to the school office.	School notes the reason why and all staff who need to know are informed. The register is marked, as applicable.
Child will be absent from school	Call school immediately and at least before 9.30am, stating the reason for the absence.	School notes the reason why, amends the register and all staff who need to know are informed.
Child is absent for more than one day for an illness	Unless the school has already been notified, call school as soon as possible, stating the reason for the continued absence.	School notes the reason why, amends the register and all staff who need to know are informed.
Child is absent for more than one day for a reason other than illness	Unless the school has already been notified, call school as soon as possible, stating the reason for the continued absence.	School states the importance of good attendance to the parent/carer and informs whether the attendance will be marked as authorised or unauthorised. Register marked accordingly.
Child is absent from school for 10 school days	Contact the school daily to explain the reason for the absence	School make a home visit within 5 days to ascertain that the family are still at the home address. If they are not at the known address, school notifies the Local Authority of the extended absence, as a <b>CME, Child Missing in Education</b> . Following the home visit, if the family are still living at the known address, school makes further contact by letter and phone calls. If the child still doesn't attend school, school notifies the Local Authority of the extended absence, as a <b>PNAR, Pupil Not Attending Regularly</b> .

## **Additional Information**

### **Parent/carers' Responsibilities**

- Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence.
- Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for absence, the school will record it as unauthorised).
- Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration. If a child arrives after the classroom door has closed, his/her parent should report directly to the school office
- Parents/carers are not able to request leave of absence for any reason, including for a family holiday, unless they can demonstrate that there are **exceptional circumstances** involved. Where a parent/carer feels there are exceptional circumstances, requests for authorised leave must be made in advance in writing to the Headteacher for consideration.

### **School Responsibilities**

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- Registers will be called twice daily, between 9am and 9.10am and at 1.00pm or 1.30pm depending on the year group. Registers will close at 9.30am and at 1.40pm. Any child arriving between 9.10am and 9.30am or 1.30pm and 1.40pm will be recorded as late 'L'. If arrival is after the closing of the register, they will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' 'U' for that session.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance provided by the administrator. The administrators check registers twice daily and will inspect registers each Friday in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained, and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.
- When a child is absent, the class teacher marks them as absent in the register, adding a comment if the reason for this is known. If no explanation has been received from the child's parent or carer, when the registers are monitored every effort will be made to contact the parent or carer. Should this prove impossible, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher.
- When a class teacher has particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, they alert the Headteacher and Nurture Team.
- The Headteacher will collect attendance data weekly, monthly and termly and report it to Governors at each meeting in the Headteachers report. If attendance falls below 95%, the Headteacher will analyse any reasons for the absences and if appropriate communicate with parents.
- The Headteacher and/or Administrator will use this data during meetings with the Nurture Team.
- The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance. These include the Headteacher and class teachers communicating regularly with parents on attendance matters; appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation offered to individual children; class attendance certificates presented weekly and termly.