



# St. Luke's CEVA Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Date of Approval: Autumn 2024

Date of review: Annually

**Aspiring to be just and kind**

**Walking humbly with God**

**Growing with every opportunity**



At St. Luke's, we are committed to fostering a community built on justice, kindness, service and respect, ensuring that everyone—regardless of background—is treated with dignity, warmth, and fairness. We are a Church of England VA School and we welcome all faiths.

We strive to embed a positive approach to our relationships which is evident in our behaviour in and out of school. We believe in restorative justice, to emphasise respect and reconciliation for all.

Our goal is to inspire pupils to make ethical choices and become agents of change, both within their own communities and beyond. We provide an environment where all individuals can flourish, experiencing a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and Jesus Christ.

With hearts of compassion, we encourage service to others, extending kindness and support both within our school and the wider world. Through an excellent and broad-based curriculum, we ignite enthusiasm, energy, and dedication, empowering pupils to fully grow within their learning journey.

We prioritise diverse opportunities in sports, music, the arts, technology, and culture, supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and personal development. We encourage pupils to grow in the 'fruits of the Spirit'—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

Our pupils grow with every opportunity and flourish spiritually.

## 1. Aim

The aim of **St. Luke's** attendance policy is to enable the school to provide consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

**St. Luke's** takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

**This document is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour for learning and inclusion.**

## 2. Legal framework

**The *Education Act 1996* states that:**

**The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —**

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

**St. Luke's** is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### Governing Board

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- ensure the school works closely with the LBN Attendance Team
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- take time at governors' meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

**School leadership team - As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:**

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues

- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body *each term* and the lead governor for attendance *half-termly* on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

### **Teachers and support staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### **Parents and carers**

Attendance policy (Year)

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher (**see section 4.5**)
- ***sign a home–school agreement as part of induction/admission.***

## **Pupils**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance

- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- ***sign a home-school agreement on joining the school.***

#### **4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences**

Absences from YR-Y6 will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation with corroborating evidence for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

The Admin Officer is responsible and should make it clear on the school register when taking an absence notification.

##### **Criteria for the issuing of a Penalty Notice**

The head teacher of the school where a child attends, will, after consideration of the facts, request a penalty notice to be issued if any of the circumstances below apply unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice in these circumstances would conflict with other attendance interventions currently in place.

##### **Types of absence requiring action from the school - HT will consider if any of the below constitute an exceptional circumstance before applying LBN guidelines:**

###### **a) Leave of absence**

A pupil has a leave of absence of five school days (10 sessions) or more during term time over a six week period, without the school's consent and their attendance has not been below 95% in the last 10 weeks prior to a notice being requested.

###### **b) Absence from assessments, tests, and examinations**

A pupil has unauthorised absence for any public examinations of which dates are published by the school in advance or, a pupil has unauthorised absence for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published by the school in advance.

###### **c) Poor attendance (Register Code - O) – failing to attend school on a regular basis**

The pupil has attendance of 95% or less but is above 90% within any twelve week period during any school year.

#### **d) Lateness**

A pupil arrives late at school, after registers have closed more, than six times in a six week period (Register Code U only - not Code L).

#### **e) Absence and lateness combined**

A pupil has a mix of six sessions of unauthorised absence and avoidable lateness during a six week period.

#### **f) Truancy – children present in a public place during school time.**

Authorised officers from the local authority, schools or the police can issue a penalty notice where they believe that a parent has committed a school attendance offence under section 444 and that the pupil in question is registered at a school.

#### **g) Children present in a public place during school hours**

Where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

### **4.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on ***the first day/each day*** of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parent explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

### **4.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

### **4.3 Authorised absences**

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

### **4.4 Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. ***The head teacher/ class teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.***

### **4.5 Family holidays and extended leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term



time. ***Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the headteacher at least 14 days/weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.***

***Retrospective applications may not be considered and the time taken could be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.***

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised ***and parents may be subject to further action by the school or fines/prosecution by the local authority.***

#### **4.6 Religious observance**

**St. Luke's** recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

#### **4.7 Late arrival**

Registration begins at 8.45am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. The registration period ends at 9.15am. Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

***A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session at 12.45pm in the Infants and 1.15pm in the Juniors by the class teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.***

**Persistent lateness may result in the school taking action.**

### **5. School action: following up absences**

Class registers are completed online and shared with the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school office will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, a

**member of SLT/Attendance Officer will discuss it with the LA attendance officer and the class teacher and the school will** contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse. **If a family take an unauthorised absence this could lead to a penalty fine in accordance with London Borough of Newham guidelines.**

**Office staff will chase families for written explanation for their absence upon the pupil's return from being away. This is for pupil safety and for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.**

***A second offence within 3 years elevates the fine to £160 per parent with no half fee for prompt payment and a 3<sup>rd</sup> offence will lead to a case being presented to Magistrate's Court and could lead to a fine of up to £2,500. A guilty judgement would appear on the parent's DBS for a 3 year period.***

***Penalty notices issued to the parents of Y6 children will see a copy placed in their transfer file.***

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, they become an unverified leaver and we inform LBN Children Missing in Education Team. The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be persistently truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help or a referral to Early Help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

**NEW FINES FROM SEPTEMBER 2024- see poster below:**

# Attending school on time every day matters

## Penalty Notices Fines for Unauthorised Absence are changing from 19 August 2024

The Department for Education has introduced a new national framework, that comes into force for any Penalty Notice issued from 19 August 2024.

### Per parent, per child

Penalty Notices fines will be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent without authorisation.

### National framework threshold

A Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England for: Unauthorised absence during a 10 school week period.

- 5 consecutive days (10 sessions) – one after the other.
- 10 non consecutive sessions – not one after the other.

The 10 school week period can go across different school terms or school years.

### First offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued (after 19 August 2024) for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- **£160** per parent, per child if paid within 28 calendar days.
- Discounted to **£80** per parent, per child if paid within 21 calendar days.

### Second offence

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- **£160** per parent, per child if paid within 28 calendar days.
- No discount for paying within 21 calendar days.

### Third and any further offences

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued.

- The case will instead be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.
- Prosecution can result in a criminal record and fine of up to £2,500.
- Cases where the defendant is found guilty in Magistrate's Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate as being due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.



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