



St Hilda's School
HARPENDEN
Caring, Curious & Confident

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(including Child Missing from Education and Admissions Register)

Name of Policy	Attendance (including Child Missing from Education) and Admissions Register Policy
Reviewed by	Dan Sayers Katy Griffin
Review Date	September 2025
Next Review Date	September 2026
To be Read in Conjunction with	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy (Includes Extremism and Radicalisation).
Legislation Referenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.• Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.• Working Together to Improve School Attendance – DfE Statutory Guidance August 2024.• Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2025)• Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools 2025

Unless otherwise stated, all Policies of St Hilda's School apply to the school in its entirety. This comprises all staff and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Junior School (Key Stage 1) and the Senior School (Key Stage 2).

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1. INTRODUCTION

At St Hilda's School, education is viewed as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education and look to parents/guardians to support this objective.

St Hilda's recognises that good attendance is essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, safeguarding, wellbeing and wider life chances. We set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset; it is a central part of our school's ethos. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

At St Hilda's, the attendance target is 97.5% and above (the national target is 96%).

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy implements both the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (August 2024) and the ISI Regulatory Requirements (Part 3, paragraph 17) and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Pupils in Reception class to Form VI are required to be in school before 8.35am when registration closes for these forms. Pupils in Pre-Nursery and Nursery are required to be in school before 8.40am when registration closes. The school day ends at 3.00pm for Nursery, 3.10pm for Reception, 3.15pm for Form I, 3.30pm for Form II and Form III, and 3.45pm for Form IV, V and VI. Many pupils remain later to take part in extra-curricular activities under the supervision of a member of staff.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or a parent/guardian for a trip/visit or sporting fixture. Details will have been provided to parents/guardians in advance.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

2. TYPES OF ABSENCE

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

2.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

2.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained.
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- shopping trips.
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- their own or family birthdays.
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- day trips.
- leave of absence to take part in protest activity during school hours.
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

2.3 Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as 'severely absent'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

3.1 Attendance Manager and Responsible Governor

The School's Attendance Champion is Mrs Griffin, who can be contacted at KGriffin@sthildasharpenden.co.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance manager for queries or concerns about attendance.

The Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Katharine Solomons who can be contacted at ksolomons@sthildasharpenden.co.uk.

3.2 Registration and Absence Reporting Procedures

In compliance with the DfE "Working together to improve school attendance" statutory guidance, the school maintains an Admissions Register, in the form of the School Database, using the TES software 'Engage'. Information, including the following, will be held for all pupils: full name, date of birth, address, nationality, ethnicity (if parents consent to ethnicity being recorded), first language and parent(s) contact details.

The School recognises its legal duty to share daily attendance data with the government and to report certain attendance issues to the local authority – specifically:

- to provide to the local authority the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). The absence reporting codes are set out in full in Appendix 1 to this Policy.
- to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed / are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) for medical reasons / illness.
- To report a pupil's deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the School will report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority in which the pupil lives.
- To consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) due to unauthorised absence (which can include lateness) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, which can span different terms and/or school years.

The School will monitor and report on attendance when required.

The School will work with parents to encourage attendance by providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

The School recognises that children missing education can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

3.3 Registration

- The school maintains an Admissions Register, in the form of the School Database, using the TES software 'Engage'. Information, including the following, will be held for all pupils: full name, date of birth, address, nationality, ethnicity (if parents consent to ethnicity being recorded), first language and parent(s) contact details.
- All pupils are registered twice a day by their Form Teacher, using online registration, before the start of morning school and immediately after lunch by whichever member of staff is teaching them.
- The morning register opens at 8.20am and will be closed at 8.35 (for Reception – Form VI) or 8.40am (for Pre-Nursery and Nursery), after which a pupil will be marked as absent or late. The afternoon register opens after the class returns from lunch and will be closed after the register is taken shortly afterwards, after which a pupil will be marked as absent or late. **This is often the cause of most absences in school and should be avoided at all costs.**
- All absences are noted by the School Office and are logged on the MIS (Engage).
- The Attendance and absence codes to be entered into Engage, as required in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2024, are set out in Appendix 1.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.
- Records will be kept of all telephone calls and/or other contact with parents and/or emergency contact numbers.
- The Local Authority will be informed if no contact has been made with parent/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate) as The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 Section 13 requires schools to inform the local authority of any pupils absent from school and where absences amount to more than 10 or more days, either consecutively or irregularly and have been unauthorised. This means school will have unauthorised 20 am/pm sessions of absences. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained/unauthorised absences. At this point your child will be considered to be "absent from education".
- The School is also required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed / are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) for medical reasons / illness.

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is **below 97.5%** and/or where punctuality is a concern.
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Attendance Champion, Mrs Griffin.
- Consider and offer reasonable adjustments.

- Offer a Families First Assessment to ensure appropriate support is considered.
- Create a personalised robust support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate.
- Seek advice, guidance and support from the Local Authority Statutory Attendance Support Team and consider appropriate legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

4.1 Parental Responsibilities for attendance.

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, at the school at which they are registered.
- Children must attend every day that the school is open (unless they are ill or permission has been granted in advance).
- Parents must ensure their child is in school prior to the morning register being closed at 8.35am (for Reception – Form VI) or 8.40am (for Pre-Nursery and Nursery), after which they will be marked as late.

4.2 Absence Reporting Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- If a child is unwell, parents/guardians should e-mail or telephone the school office before 8.20am on the first day of absence. The school will always telephone on the first day of an unexplained absence.
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.20 am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested (where the school has reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the absences) where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness see Annex C.

4.3 Advance Requests for Absence

- Requests for absence must be made in writing and reach the school at least 3 days in advance.

- Requests for exceptional absence (i.e. absence for days other than Religious Festivals, medical or dental appointments or for illness) should be sent to the Headmaster at least two weeks in advance.
- The school will always aim to send parents/guardians details of term dates at least a year in advance so that family holidays can be arranged without disrupting a child's education.
- The general policy of the Board of Governors is **not** to allow holidays to be taken during term time.
- Parents must advise the School of any change in registration details e.g. address. The School will record the new address, and the moving in date, whilst also keeping a record of the old.

4.4. Parental Contact Details

- Parents or guardians should provide a minimum of two emergency contact telephone numbers.
- In the situation where parents are separated or divorced, the name, address and contact details of those with parental responsibility must be registered on the School's system (unless there is a court order to the contrary). A person with parental responsibility is entitled to information about their child.

5. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at St Hilda's School are:

Gates open: 8.15am

Registration starts: 8.20am

Registration closes: 8.35am (Reception – Form VI), 8.40am (Pre-Nursery and Nursery)

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.15am when children can begin to come into school.
- Registers open at 8.20am and close at 8.35am (for Reception – Form VI) and 8.40am (for Pre-Nursery and Nursery).
- Children arriving after 8.35am are required to come into school via the school office (or after 8.40am if for Pre-Nursery and Nursery). If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- At 8.35am the registers for Reception – Form VI will be closed. At 8.40am the registers for Pre-Nursery and Nursery will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Mrs Griffin but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school seeking advice and guidance from the Local Authority.

6. UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can consider a Families First Assessment, use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nursing Team, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Family Support Worker through DSPL7 or the Harpenden Plus Partnership, or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

The name and contact details of the School's Attendance Champion, who parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance are:

Name: Mrs Griffin

Email: KGriffin@sthildasharpenden.co.uk

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

7. PROCEDURES AND REPORTING IN RELATION TO ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL.

If a child is absent from school without notice, attempts to contact parents will be made by telephone and by email, as outlined above. If no contact is made within a reasonable time, a home visit may be instigated by the Headmaster.

The School recognises its legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority, specifically:

- to provide to the local authority the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically

classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). The absence reporting codes are set out in full in Appendix 1 to this Policy.

- to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed / are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) for medical reasons / illness.
- To report a pupil's deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the School will report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority in which the pupil lives

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual abuse and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. The School recognises the importance of identifying abuse and in the case of absent pupils, help prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing from education ("CME") in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to the local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

8. PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO PUPILS JOINING/LEAVING THE SCHOOL.

The School recognises its statutory duties in relation to both pupils being added to the admissions register upon enrolment to the school and pupils being removed from the admissions register upon leaving the school permanently.

8.1 Pupils joining the school other than at the beginning of Reception

- The previous school will be contacted to confirm whether information needs to be handed over (including Safeguarding, SEND, Pastoral Concerns)
- The full name and contact details of the previous school will be recorded on Engage.
- The start date of the pupil joining St Hilda's will be the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- The Local Authority will be advised of any pupil joining, in line with its guidance.

8.2 Pupils leaving the school (including if pupil has moved overseas)

- A child is not permitted to be removed from the School roll until the next school has been confirmed, except with the agreement of the Local Authority. A pupil's name will be deleted from the admission register on the first day they are entered on the admission register of the new school.
- The new school will be contacted at the beginning of the term they are due to join, to confirm attendance.
- Details of the new school and leaving date at St Hilda's will be recorded on Engage.

- The Local Authority will be advised of any pupil leaving (other than pupils leaving the School at the end of Form VI) in line with its guidance.

9. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

Under the Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools 2025, Children Missing Education (“CME”) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

CME does not include children who are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school.

St Hilda’s recognises the critical role it plays, as a school, in early identification and intervention in relation to CME or children who may be at risk of becoming a CME. The School recognises its statutory duties and best practice under the Statutory Guidance and in particular will:

- As set out in this policy, on a day-to-day basis, monitor pupils’ attendance through the daily attendance register, and address poor or irregular attendance in order to prevent pupils becoming CME.
- Take action without delay where there is a concern that a child’s safety or well-being is at risk, as set out in the School’s Safeguarding Policy.
- Follow all guidance on removing or adding pupils’ names from or to the School roll.
- Be proactive in identifying pupils at risk of becoming a CME.
- Support the Local Authority in making reasonable enquiries to identify the location of former pupils who are suspected to be CME, and share data with Local Authorities and other agencies.

10.SAFEGUARDING

A child missing from education is a safeguarding concern and will be treated as such.

This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Senior Management Team, in line with the school’s review schedule for policies.

APPENDIX 1

Attendance and Absence codes, as set out in Regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2024.

Table 1

Attendance	Code
The session is a morning session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	/
The session is an afternoon session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	\
The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	L

Table 2

Attendance	Code
The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(12) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.	K
The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff.	V
The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity within paragraph (11) that is a sporting activity.	P
The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity within paragraph (11) that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the proprietor as part of the pupil's education.	W
The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity within paragraph (11).	B

Table 3

Attendance	Code
The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	C1
The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	M
The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	J1
The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	S
The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.	X
The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the proprietor that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	C2
The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil.	D
The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose.	C
The pupil is a mobile child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.	T

The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs.	R
The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness.	I
The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them within paragraph (12) or (13).	Q
The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the proprietor or a local authority is not available.	Y1
The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Y2
Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.	Y3
The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention within paragraph (14).	Y5
The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be— (a)contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or any body or authority exercising equivalent functions in relation to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; or (b)prohibited by any enactment relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease or any instrument made under such an enactment.	Y6
The pupil is excluded from the school for any other reason.	E
The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Y7
The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.	G
The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established.	N
None of the other rows of this table applies, or this code is required to be used by paragraphs (7) and (9)(b).	O