United Learning – Independent Schools Attendance Policy

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St Ives School – United Learning Independent School

1. Policy Statement

St Ives School recognises that high attendance and punctuality are fundamental to academic success, personal development, and the wellbeing and safety of pupils. This policy sets out expectations, procedures and responsibilities of all pupils, parents, staff, and school leaders at St Ives School in relation to attendance.

Its purpose is to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality; to ensure every pupil has access to a full-time suitable education; to support families in meeting their legal obligations; to identify and address patterns of poor attendance early and to ensure there are clear procedures in place for monitoring and intervention.

Whilst all pupils have a right to full-time education and the school has high attendance expectations for all pupils, the school will account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. In applying this policy, the school will consider its duties under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This policy was developed having regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE) 2024
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014,
- Children Missing Education (DfE) 2024

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

- **Senior Attendance Champion** – The member of the senior leadership team designated to oversee all attendance-related matters and to champion and promote good attendance.
- **Persistent Absence** – Attendance below 90%.
- **Unauthorised Absence** – Absence that has not been authorised by the school in line with the processes set out below.
- **Parent** – In this document the term 'parent' is to refer to a parent, carer, guardian, or anyone with legal responsibility for the pupil.

3. Key contacts

School office – parents must call 01428 643734 or email office@stiveshaslemere.com before 8:30am to report illness and any other unplanned absences.

Senior Attendance Champion	Kay Goldsworthy	Headteacher	01428 643734 Kay.goldsworthy@stiveshaslemere.com
School Attendance Officer	Beth Niven	School Support	01428 643734 office@stiveshaslemere.com
Form Tutor	For initial support on attendance please contact the pupil's relevant Form Tutor		
Co-Ordinators	For additional support on attendance please contact the pupil's relevant Co-Ordinator – Lucy Tapp (EYFS Co-Ordinator) lucy.tapp@stiveshaslemere.com Jenny Duggin (Pre-Prep Co-Ordinator) jenny.duggin@stiveshaslemere.com Rachel Parker (Prep Co-Ordinator) Rachel.parker@stiveshaslemere.com		

4. Publication of this policy

This policy is published on the school website and will be sent to parents when pupils join the school and when it is updated. A reminder of this policy will be sent at the beginning of the school year to all parents.

5. Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body will:

- Have overarching responsibility for attendance at the school.
- Delegate responsibilities under this policy as described below.
- Monitor and review attendance on a termly basis.
- Ensure this policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- Monitor attendance data regularly.
- Report termly attendance to the Local Governing Body and United Learning.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained.
- Oversee daily attendance systems.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Work with families, pastoral teams, and external agencies to address attendance concerns.

- Ensure that staff are familiar with attendance expectations and processes and apply them consistently.
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the School's attendance strategies and processes.

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Complete morning and afternoon registration accurately.
- Monitor attendance daily.
- Refer unexplained absences to the office team to make same-day enquiries with parents.
- Raise concerns promptly with the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Deal with lateness consistently in line with the Behaviour Policy – ensure this behaviour policy deals with punctuality/attendance.

School Attendance Officer

- Follows up on the day regarding any unexplained absences.
- Liaises with the Head to ensure pupil absences are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Ensures attendance registers are completed accurately.

All staff will:

- Promote and regularly communicate the importance of good attendance for example through assemblies, PSHE lessons and conversations with pupils and parents.
- Support a school culture of high expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Be aware that poor attendance may be a symptom of wider concerns about a child.
- Attend training and briefings relevant to attendance and adhere to this policy.

Parents are expected to:

- Be aware of their legal obligation to ensure that their child(ren) of compulsory school age receive an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.
- Observe the terms of the parent contract relating to conduct and attendance and be aware that failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the school about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.
- Ensure their child attends school daily and on time.
- Notify the school of any absence by 8:30am and provide a reason for it.
- Provide reasons and, if requested, evidence for absences (e.g., medical notes).

- Try to book routine dentist and other appointments outside the school day wherever possible.
- Use the procedure below under “Leave of absence” when seeking advance authorisation for absence.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school daily and arrive on time.
- Be responsible for attending registration and lessons punctually.
- Remain on the school site during the school day except where attending an authorised activity.

6. Timings of school day and registration

- The school day begins at 8:30am and ends at 3pm (EYFS) 3:30pm (Pre-Prep) and 4pm (Prep); pupils are expected to be onsite or attending a school approved activity for the entire day, this period may be extended for the purpose of attending clubs etc.
- Morning registration is at 8:30am; afternoon registration is at 1pm for Nursery and 1:45pm for Pre-Prep and Prep.
- Registers are taken electronically and completed within 10 minutes.
- If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed, they will be recorded as a late arrival.
- Late arrival after the register closes is marked as an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is provided.
- Parents must notify the school office by 8.30am on the day of any unplanned absence.
- Where there is an unexplained absence, this will be referred to Beth Niven who will contact the parents to follow up on the same day.

7. Leave of absence

- Applications for authorised leave of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Head via the school office office@stiveshaslemere.com .
- The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record, and the relevant background context behind the request.
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to grant permission to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.

- A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

8. The Attendance Register

Attendance and absences are recorded in the school Attendance Register using the relevant codes as set out in *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024* and the statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE) 2024*.

The Attendance Register will show whether a pupil is present, late, attending a place other than school or absent.

Absences are either:

- Authorised: e.g., illness, religious observance, medical appointments (evidence may be required).
- Unauthorised: e.g., holidays during term time without authorisation, absence without valid explanation.

The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. Registers are legal records and , in line with current legislation, the School will preserve every entry in the attendance register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Where amendments are made, the School will ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. As the attendance register is a record of the pupil's presence at the time it was taken, this register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

9. Monitoring and Intervention

Data from the Attendance Register is monitored to identify weekly attendance patterns and trends and to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. Identifying the pupils who need support will not just focus on persistent and severe absence, but the school will also seek to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.

The school will work with parents and pupils and relevant school staff such as the SENCO, if appropriate, to identify particular barriers to attendance and to put in place appropriate support. Support will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the pupil. As a general guide, the following principles will be followed:

- Attendance below 95% triggers investigation and conversations with parents to identify barriers to attendance.

- Below 90% (persistent absence) or below 50% (serious absence) prompts a structured intervention plan; in such cases the school will work with the local authority to put in place targeted support which may include Early Help.
- Home visits may be conducted if absence is unexplained or safeguarding concerns are raised about a child who is not attending school.
- Attendance panels may be convened with families and senior leaders.

10. Additional needs

It is acknowledged that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school, for example, those with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, and/or social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. In such cases the school will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance and to put the right support in place.

Where appropriate, this will include considering what reasonable adjustments can be made to remove any potential in-school barriers to attendance. Where it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable can be considered part of a re-integration package to meet the child's needs and encourage regular attendance at school. This may be appropriate where a pupil is unable initially to attend full-time education. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and there will be pastoral support and other programmes running alongside the part-time timetable to encourage full-time attendance.

Where a pupil has an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

The school may, in limited circumstances, with the agreement of parents, provide remote education to enable pupils who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site for a time-limited period. In such cases, the pupil will be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code.

11. Safeguarding and Attendance

All pupils

Persistent or unusual absence patterns may be indicators of safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed if:

- A pupil is absent without explanation for more than two consecutive days.
- A pattern of concern arises.
- Follow up action in such cases may include a referral to children's social care.

12. Data Collection and Reporting

- Attendance data is reported to the Local Governing Body and United Learning on a regular basis.

- Individual pupil attendance is included in school reports.
- The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. This includes:
    - New pupil and deletion returns outside of normal transition time.
    - Attendance returns (where a pupil has 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence)
    - Sickness returns (where a pupil is unable to attend because of sickness and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more in one school year)
- The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State and inspectorates.
- Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

13. Attendance Strategy

This policy supports the attendance strategy of St Ives School which aims to promote a culture of high attendance that supports pupil welfare and educational outcomes such that all pupils are accounted for and supported to access their full-time education entitlement. The School seeks to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded, monitored, and reported, and that our systems and processes are designed to help reduce absences and to identify and address patterns of persistent or severe absence, including for pupils with SEND or health needs, through early intervention and partnership with families.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will be monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion and updated and revised if necessary, during the annual cycle.

Template Owner	Operations Business Partner – Independent Schools
Department responsible	School Improvement Teams
United Learning Independent Schools/Academies/Both	United Learning Independent Schools
Reviewed	August 2025
Date Policy Authorised	1st October 2025
Policy Owner	School Attendance Champion
Review Date	1st October 2026
Date Policy agreed by Local Governing Body	1st October 2025
Next LGB review date:	October 2026