St Paul's
Church of England Primary School

ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Academic Year 2026–2027
Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

Believe and Achieve
"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart." Colossians 3:23

Contents

Statement of Intent
1. Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Definitions
4. Attendance Expectations and the School Day
5. Absence Reporting and First-Day Response
6. Attendance Registers and National Attendance Codes
7. Authorising Leave of Absence
8. Medical, SEND and Mental Health-Related Absence
9. Punctuality and Lateness
10. Children Missing Education and Safeguarding
11. Attendance Support and the Graduated Response
12. Persistent and Severe Absence
13. Legal Intervention and Penalty Notices
14. Term-Time Leave and Exceptional Circumstances
15. Religious Observance
16. Medical and Dental Appointments
17. Children Performing, Modelling, Sport and Other Employment
18. Part-Time / Build-Up Timetables
19. Working with Parents and Pupils
20. Attendance Rewards and Culture
21. Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting
22. Staff Training
23. Equality, Accessibility and Data Protection
24. Policy Monitoring and Review

Statement of Intent

St Paul's CE Primary School is committed to ensuring that every pupil can access their full-time education and achieve their potential. Regular attendance is essential to educational progress, safeguarding, wellbeing, relationships and participation in the wider life of school.

We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances. Some pupils and families experience barriers to attendance, including special educational needs and/or disabilities, physical or mental health needs, anxiety, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, bullying, difficulties with transport, housing or finances, or other vulnerabilities. Our approach is therefore supportive, relational, evidence-informed and focused on removing barriers while maintaining high expectations.
Our attendance culture is built on the principle that attendance is everyone's responsibility. We will work with pupils, parents/carers, the Local Advisory Board, the Trust, Salford City Council and relevant services to improve attendance and punctuality.

- Every pupil should attend school regularly and be in school, on time, every day it is open unless absence has been authorised.
- Promote the benefits of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Identify barriers to attendance early and respond before patterns become entrenched.
- Use a support-first approach, while taking proportionate formal action where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with, or not appropriate.
- Treat safeguarding and attendance as closely connected: unexplained or increasing absence may indicate that a child is at risk of harm.
- Make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate support for pupils with SEND, medical needs and mental health difficulties.
- Work positively and respectfully with families, while being clear about legal responsibilities.
- Use accurate attendance data to identify individual pupils and groups who require support or challenge.

The school's Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is the Headteacher – Victoria Walton

The school's Attendance manager, is responsible for monitoring and reviewing attendance alongside Deputy Headteacher – Courtney Brooks & Danielle Harvey.

Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy has regard to, and is operated in accordance with, the following legislation and statutory guidance applicable to England in 2026–2027:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 444 and 444A–444B.
- Education Act 2002.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024.
- Working together to improve school attendance – Department for Education statutory guidance, updated 9 July 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026.

- Children Missing Education – statutory guidance, updated September 2025.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – statutory guidance, March 2026.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.
- Relevant guidance relating to children in need, children with a social worker, looked-after children and young carers.
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963 and relevant regulations relating to child performance and employment.

The policy will also be implemented alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection, SEND, supporting pupils with medical conditions, behaviour, complaints, children missing education and equality policies.

The DfE attendance statutory guidance was technically updated on 9 July 2026. This policy has been reviewed against the 2026–2027 position.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Local Advisory Board	Provide strategic oversight and support/challenge; review attendance data and trends; ensure attendance is a priority; ensure relevant staff receive appropriate training; monitor equality and safeguarding implications.
Headteacher	Lead the school's attendance culture and strategy; ensure statutory duties are met; oversee intervention and legal escalation; ensure accurate registers; report to the LAB/Trust.
Attendance Lead	Coordinate day-to-day attendance systems; analyse data; identify pupils/cohorts needing support; monitor interventions; communicate with families; liaise with Salford City Council and other agencies.
DSL/ DDSL/safeguarding team:	Consider whether absence or patterns of absence indicate safeguarding concerns; ensure referrals and safeguarding procedures are followed; coordinate with social workers and other agencies.
SENDCo	Identify and reduce attendance barriers related to SEND; ensure reasonable adjustments and relevant plans are implemented; contribute to assess-plan-do-review processes.
Teachers and support staff	Take registers accurately; follow absence procedures; notice changes in attendance/punctuality; contribute to supportive relationships and escalate concerns.
Office staff	Record absence notifications accurately; undertake first-day contact; maintain emergency contacts; pass safeguarding/attendance concerns promptly to the appropriate leader.
Pupils	Attend every day possible, arrive on time, engage with learning and communicate worries or barriers to trusted adults.
Parents/carers	Ensure children attend regularly and punctually; report absence promptly; provide accurate information; work with school to remove barriers; make appointments outside school hours where possible.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Authorised absence	An absence recorded using an authorised attendance code where the circumstances meet the relevant legal/guidance requirements and the school has approved or accepted the absence.
Unauthorised absence	An absence that does not meet the requirements for an authorised code, including unexplained absence, unauthorised leave/holiday, or absence where the school is not satisfied that the reason is acceptable.
Persistent Absence (PA)	Attendance below 90%, meaning a pupil misses 10% or more of their possible sessions.
Severe Absence (SA)	Attendance at or below 50%. These pupils require particularly intensive assessment and support and may require multi-agency involvement.
Late (L)	Arrival after the register has opened but before it has closed.
Late after the register closes (U)	Arrival after the register has closed but before the end of the session; this counts as an absence for that session.
Leave of absence	Permission granted by the school for a pupil to be absent from school in defined circumstances.
Exceptional circumstances	Circumstances which are genuinely exceptional, individual and unavoidable, considered on a case-by-case basis. They do not include ordinary family holidays or convenience.

Attendance Expectations and the School Day

The school's expectation is that pupils attend every day the school is open unless absence is authorised. The school's attendance ambition is 96% or above; however, this is an internal improvement ambition and does not replace the expectation of daily attendance.

The morning register opens at the start of the school day and closes 30 minutes after the start of the session. At St Paul's, the morning register opens at 8:45am and closes at 9:00am. Pupils arriving after 9:00am but before 9:30am will be recorded as late. Arrival at or after 9:30am will normally be recorded as U unless another statutory code applies.

The afternoon register is taken at the start of the afternoon session. At St Paul's this is normally at 1:15pm. Registers are completed promptly and accurately.

Good attendance is not simply a percentage. The school will also consider patterns such as absence on particular days, repeated lateness, repeated short absences, absence before/after holidays or assessments, and changes from a pupil's normal attendance pattern.

Absence Reporting and First-Day Response

Parents/carers must contact the school by **8:15am** on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence and, where possible, an indication of how long the pupil is expected to be absent. Absence can be reported by telephone, in person at the office or through the school's Arbor system.

1. Where no reason has been received by the close of the morning register, the school will make first-day contact as soon as practicable.
2. If contact cannot be established, the school may use additional emergency contacts and, where appropriate, undertake a home visit.
3. Where a pupil is vulnerable, has a social worker, is a child in need, is looked after, is subject to a child protection plan, or there are other safeguarding concerns, the school will consider whether same-day contact with the relevant professional is required.
4. Unexplained absence will be followed up promptly and recorded using the correct attendance code.
5. Repeated unexplained absence will trigger further attendance and safeguarding assessment.

The school will request medical evidence or other information where this is necessary to understand an absence, particularly where there is a pattern of absence or where the school has reasonable concerns. We will not routinely require medical evidence for every minor illness.

Attendance Registers and National Attendance Codes

The school will maintain an electronic attendance register and use the national attendance and absence codes. Registers will be taken twice each day: once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. The school will ensure that attendance data is accurate, timely and capable of audit.

The school will use the full national code set where applicable, including the newer Y1–Y7 codes introduced within the national framework.

Code	Use
/	Present in the morning
\	Present in the afternoon
L	Late before the register closes
U	Arrived after the register closed
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave for a pupil to participate in a regulated performance or activity
C2	Part-time timetable / agreed reduced provision
G	Holiday taken during term time without permission
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Unauthorised absence where no other applicable code applies
E	Suspended or permanently excluded, where the pupil is not attending alternative provision

D	Dual registration
B	Attending approved educational activity
K	Attending provision arranged by the local authority
P	Participating in an approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Not required to attend for the reason specified in the regulations
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements, where the statutory criteria are met
Y1	Unable to attend because normally provided transport is not available
Y2	Unable to attend because of widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend because part of the school premises is closed
Y4	Unable to attend because the whole school premises is unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend because the pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause
#	Planned whole-school or partial closure, such as school holidays

Any amendment to the register will preserve the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment and the identity/role of the person making the change. Attendance register entries will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Authorising Leave of Absence

A parent/carer does not have an entitlement to take a child out of school during term time. The school can only grant leave of absence where the relevant legal requirements are met.

The Headteacher may grant leave for exceptional circumstances. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the circumstances, the likely impact on the pupil's education, previous attendance and any safeguarding or welfare considerations.

The school will not operate a blanket rule that leave can never be granted; decisions must be lawful, individual and evidence-based.

The school **will not** authorise ordinary family holidays, leisure trips, birthdays, shopping trips, routine family events or other avoidable absences.

Requests should be made in advance using the school's leave of absence form. The school cannot normally authorise leave retrospectively.

Where leave is refused and the pupil is nevertheless absent, the absence will normally be recorded as unauthorised and may meet the threshold for legal intervention.

Medical, SEND and Mental Health-Related Absence

The school recognises that physical health, disability, SEND and mental health can affect attendance. The attendance ambition remains high, but the school will focus on identifying and reducing barriers rather than treating health-related absence simply as non-compliance.

- Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented where required.
- Health care plans, EHCPs, individual plans and other relevant support plans will inform attendance planning.
- Where appropriate, the school will involve the SENDCo, DSL, school nurse, GP/health services, Early Help, Children's Services, Salford attendance team or other relevant professionals.
- Where anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance or mental health difficulties affect attendance, the school will work with the pupil and family to identify barriers and plan a supported return.
- Where attendance concerns also indicate a safeguarding risk, the safeguarding policy and referral procedures take priority.
- Any part-time or build-up timetable must be exceptional, time-limited, documented, regularly reviewed and used only where it is in the pupil's best interests.

Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality is an important part of attendance. Repeated lateness can result in lost learning, disruption to others and increased safeguarding concerns.

- Parents/carers should ensure pupils arrive in sufficient time to be ready for learning.
- Arrivals after the start time but before the register closes will be recorded as L.
- Arrivals after the register closes will normally be recorded as U and will count as an absence for that session.
- Repeated L or U codes will be monitored and may lead to a punctuality meeting, attendance support plan or legal intervention where the national threshold is met.

Children Missing Education and Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained, prolonged or changing patterns of absence may indicate neglect, exploitation, bullying, abuse, mental health difficulties, family crisis or other risks. Staff must remain alert to this and report concerns to the DSL.

The school will follow its Children Missing Education procedures and work with Salford City Council where a pupil is at risk of becoming, or has become, missing from education. The school will provide information promptly when required and will maintain appropriate records.
Where a pupil disappears from school during the school day, the school's missing child procedure will be activated immediately. Searches, parent/carer contact, safeguarding escalation and police involvement will be proportionate to the circumstances and risk. KCSIE 2026 comes into force on 1 September 2026. The school will ensure attendance-related safeguarding practice is consistent with the 2026 guidance.

Attendance Support and the Graduated Response

St Paul's uses a graduated, support-first approach. The school will not wait until a pupil becomes persistently absent before acting.

Stage	Typical action
Universal	Promote excellent attendance; explain expectations at induction; communicate attendance information; celebrate improvement; monitor daily attendance and punctuality.
Early identification	Identify emerging patterns; contact family; understand barriers; agree practical actions; monitor closely.
Targeted support	Attendance meeting; pupil voice; attendance support plan/attendance contract where appropriate; involve SENDCo/DSL/pastoral staff; Early Help or other partners where needed.
Escalated support	Formal review; assess whether further support is appropriate; consider Notice to Improve where appropriate; liaise with Salford attendance services.
Legal intervention	Where the statutory/national threshold is met and legal intervention is appropriate, refer/request action in accordance with Salford City Council procedures and the national framework.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is attendance below 90%. Severe absence is attendance at or below 50%. These definitions are used nationally and are not simply triggers for punishment; they identify pupils who need increasingly intensive assessment and support.

- PA and SA pupils will be reviewed regularly by the Attendance Lead and relevant leaders.
- Individual barriers will be identified and recorded.
- Support will be monitored using an assess-plan-do-review approach.
- Where appropriate, the school will involve Early Help, Children's Services, health services, Salford City Council and other partners.
- Where absence is linked to safeguarding concerns, the DSL will ensure safeguarding action is taken.
- Where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with, or not appropriate, formal/legal action will be considered.

Legal Intervention and Penalty Notices

The school will follow the national framework and Salford City Council's current arrangements. Legal intervention is considered on an individual basis and is not an automatic response to a particular percentage of absence.

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may include any combination of G, O and U codes. Schools must consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate and whether support or another legal intervention would be more effective.

Where the threshold is met, the school will follow the Salford process and relevant Code of Conduct. A Notice to Improve may be used where support is appropriate but has not been effective or engaged with, unless it is not appropriate in the circumstances.

Stage	National framework position
First Penalty Notice	£160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; full amount payable within 28 days.
Second Penalty Notice within 3 years	£160 per parent, per child, with no discount.
Further offence within 3 years	A third Penalty Notice is not normally available; the case may be considered for prosecution under section 444(1A) Education Act 1996, subject to the relevant legal process.

Salford City Council confirms that its current national-threshold approach is 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period and that the first fine is £160, discounted to £80 within 21 days, with a second fine at £160 without discount.

Term-Time Leave and Exceptional Circumstances

Parents/carers are expected to arrange holidays during the published school holidays. Term-time holidays will not be authorised.
Exceptional circumstances must be genuinely exceptional and will be considered individually. Examples might include circumstances involving serious family crisis, bereavement or other unavoidable events. The existence of a family event, cheaper holiday, convenience or work commitment does not in itself make an absence exceptional.
The Headteacher will decide whether leave is authorised and for how long. Evidence may be requested where necessary.
Salford City Council states that parents have no entitlement to term-time holidays and that schools are expected to operate firm policies to reduce unauthorised term-time absence.

Religious Observance

The school will make appropriate provision for religious observance in accordance with the law and DfE attendance guidance. Parents/carers should notify the school in advance. The school may seek advice from the relevant faith body where necessary to establish the appropriate day(s).

Medical and Dental Appointments

Appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever reasonably possible. Where this cannot be achieved, parents/carers should provide advance notice and ensure the pupil misses the minimum amount of learning necessary.
The school may request evidence where appropriate, particularly where repeated appointments contribute significantly to absence. Routine appointments do not automatically justify a full day's absence.

Children Performing, Modelling, Sport and Other Employment

Where a pupil is required to be absent for a performance, modelling, sporting activity or other regulated activity, the school will apply the relevant statutory arrangements and attendance codes. Where a licence or approval is required, parents/carers and organisers must ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place before the absence occurs.

Part-Time / Build-Up Timetables

A part-time or build-up timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the pupil's best interests. It must not be used as a long-term solution or as a way of managing behaviour.

- The arrangement must be agreed with the pupil and parents/carers and documented.
- It must identify the reason, expected hours, support and named responsible staff.
- It must have a clear intended date for return to full-time education.
- It must be reviewed regularly and adjusted or ended when appropriate.
- The school will notify Salford City Council where required by local arrangements.

Working with Parents and Pupils

The school will communicate clearly, respectfully and consistently. Families will be encouraged to discuss barriers early rather than waiting for attendance to deteriorate.

- Attendance information will be shared with parents regularly.
- Attendance concerns will be explained in terms of missed learning and the pupil's wellbeing and future opportunities.
- The school will seek pupil voice when planning support.
- Families will be offered practical support where barriers are identified.
- Communication will be accessible and sensitive to family circumstances and disability.
- Where families do not engage, the school will continue to communicate expectations and may escalate support or legal intervention where appropriate.

Attendance Rewards and Culture

The school will promote attendance positively and avoid creating incentives that disadvantage pupils whose absence is related to disability, health, SEND or other protected or vulnerable circumstances.

- Celebration of improvement as well as high attendance.
- Recognition through Celebration Worship and class recognition.
- Attendance information in newsletters and parent communications.
- Class-based recognition linked to the school's attendance ambition.
- Recognition of individual effort, resilience and successful re-engagement.

Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting

The Attendance Lead will monitor attendance daily and analyse it at least half-termly, with more frequent review for pupils causing concern.

- Whole-school attendance and punctuality.
- Year-group and class patterns.
- Individual pupil attendance and absence codes.
- Persistent and severe absence.
- Pupils with SEND and/or health needs.
- Children with social workers, children in need, children subject to protection plans and looked-after children.
- Young carers and other vulnerable groups.
- FSM/disadvantaged pupils and other relevant demographic groups.
- Patterns by day, week, term and reason/code.
- Impact of attendance interventions.
- Local, regional and national benchmarking where data is available.

The Headteacher will report attendance to the Local Advisory Board/Trust at appropriate intervals. The LAB will provide support and challenge and ensure attendance remains a strategic priority.

Staff Training

All staff will receive appropriate attendance and safeguarding training as part of induction and ongoing professional development. Training will cover:

- The importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- The legal requirements for registers and attendance codes.
- How to recognise emerging attendance concerns.
- How absence may be linked to safeguarding.
- How to respond to SEND, health and mental health barriers.
- The school's graduated response and referral routes.
- How to record and share information accurately.
- The importance of positive, respectful communication with families.

Equality, Accessibility and Data Protection

The school will implement this policy fairly and without unlawful discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required by the Equality Act 2010. The school will consider the needs of disabled pupils, pupils with SEND, health conditions, EAL and other relevant needs.

Attendance data will be processed in accordance with UK data protection law, the school's privacy arrangements and information-sharing duties. Information will be shared with the Trust, Local Advisory Board, local authority and other agencies where there is a lawful basis and where necessary to safeguard children or fulfil statutory duties.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the academic year. The Headteacher and Attendance Lead will review the effectiveness of this policy and the school's attendance strategy at least annually, and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements change.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2027, or earlier if required.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Escalation Overview

Step	School response
1. Daily monitoring	Registers checked; unexplained absence followed up promptly.
2. Emerging concern	Attendance/punctuality pattern identified; family contacted; barriers explored.
3. Targeted support	Attendance meeting/support plan; pupil voice; relevant school staff involved.
4. Review	Impact of support assessed; plan amended; external services considered.
5. Formal escalation	Formal attendance meeting/attendance contract and/or Notice to Improve where appropriate.
6. Legal intervention	Where the national threshold is met and legal action is appropriate, referral/request made through Salford City Council procedures.
7. Safeguarding escalation	At any stage, safeguarding concerns are referred immediately to the DSL and relevant agencies.

Appendix 2 – Key Attendance Messages for Parents

- Every school day matters.
- Parents/carers should report absence by 8:15am on the first day.
- Please arrange routine appointments outside school hours where possible.
- Term-time holidays are not normally authorised.
- 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period may meet the national threshold for consideration of a Penalty Notice.
- If attendance is becoming difficult, contact school early – support is available.
- Absence and attendance concerns can also be safeguarding concerns, so the school may make additional checks when a pupil is absent without explanation.

Sources checked for this 2026–2027 update: Department for Education statutory attendance guidance updated 9 July 2026; DfE KCSIE 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026); DfE Children Missing Education guidance; DfE attendance communications resources; DfE 2026–2027 school census attendance coding; Salford City Council attendance and penalty notice information current in August 2026.

St Paul's
Church of England Primary School

ST PAUL'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Important information for parents and carers
In line with Department for Education guidance and the school's attendance policy, leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken during term time will not normally be authorised.
Submitting this form does not guarantee that the request will be approved. Requests should be submitted to the Headteacher in advance of the proposed absence. Unauthorised absences may be recorded in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

1. Pupil details
Child's full name: _____
Class / Year group: _____
Parent/carer's full name: _____
Contact telephone number: _____
Email address: _____

2. Details of the requested absence
First day of absence: _____
Date of return to school: _____
Total number of school days requested: _____
Destination (if applicable): _____

3. Reason for the request
Please explain the exceptional circumstances for which you are requesting leave during term time. Include any relevant information that you would like the Headteacher to consider.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you considered alternative dates during the school holidays?
☐ Yes
☐ No
If no, please explain why:

_____

_____

4. Supporting information
Please attach any supporting evidence that you would like the school to consider, where applicable.

_____

_____

5. Parent/carer declaration
I confirm that the information provided on this form is accurate and complete.
I understand that:

- Leave of absence during term time is not an entitlement.
- Requests will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of the circumstances and the relevant statutory guidance.

- The Headteacher will decide whether the absence can be authorised.
- The school will notify me of the decision.
- If the request is not authorised and my child is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to further action in accordance with the school's attendance policy and applicable regulations.
- I remain responsible for ensuring that my child attends school regularly and on time.

Parent/carer signature: _____
Date: _____

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6. School use only
Date request received: _____
Number of school days requested: _____
Attendance information considered: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Decision:
☐ Authorised
☐ Not authorised
Reason for decision:

Headteacher's name: _____
Signature: _____
Date decision communicated to parent/carer: _____
Attendance code / recording completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Additional notes:

St Paul's C.E. Primary School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to promote good attendance, support pupils' wellbeing and ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.