

St Lawrence Academies Trust

Attendance Policy

Version 1.2 (July 2026)

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Approval Responsibility:	Trust Board of Directors
Review and Recommendation Committee:	Trust Board of Directors
Implementation Date:	Autumn Term 2026
Review Date:	Autumn Term 2027
Target Audience:	LGB's, Headteachers, Senior Attendance Champions (SAC's), Parents
Reference Documents:	KCSIE 2026 DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026

VERSION CONTROL

Revision level	Revision date	Description of changes
1.0	May 26	New Policy prepared.
1.1	June 26	Policy approved by Board with SoD change to centralise

Revision level	Revision date	Description of changes
1.2	July 26	Updated to reflect July 2026 statutory requirements: taking registers at the same time, defining consecutive/cumulative sickness returns, implementing the mandatory Notice to Improve framework, and addressing remote education limitations.

Prepared: July 2026 Signature Mike Adnitt	Approved: Signature Chair of Board	Released: Signature
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1. Introduction and Strategic Alignment

This policy is a strategic overview of the expectations of school approach to monitoring and improving attendance. Schools must have a senior leader who has the role of Senior Attendance Champion (SAC). School based policy must:

- Meet current statutory requirements,
- Align with the requirements and moral expectations of this Trust policy,
- Appropriately meet the needs and challenges of attendance in their local context.

The St Lawrence Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and recognises that regular and punctual attendance is essential for a child to reach their full educational achievement.

Belonging and Purpose: Attendance is viewed through our philosophy of "Hope with a Plan"—where ambition is driven by system design to create a strong sense of belonging. We recognise that a pupil's sense of belonging in a safe environment where they feel enabled to thrive and achieve is the primary driver of attendance.

Inclusion: We maintain unrelenting high expectations of behaviour and engagement while actively removing barriers for every child. We ensure that behavioral support, reintegration, provision and de-escalation strategies are designed to keep pupils in school, not creating barriers to their attendance.

Attendance Leadership and Management Roles

Senior Attendance Champion (SAC): Each school must appoint an SAC from the Senior Leadership Team. The SAC is responsible for the strategic lead of attendance, overseeing data analysis, ensuring registers are taken at the same time for all registered pupils, ensuring registers are closed within 30 minutes of the start of a session, and maintaining attendance as a central part of the school's culture.

Trust Attendance Lead: A central team based role that is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of schools to improve attendance. Developmental role in developing the trust capacity and strategy for a single source of trust and a trust wide attendance dashboard using Arbor and Power BI.

Trust Board: The Board provides strategic oversight by reviewing data termly, ensuring school leaders fulfill statutory duties, and facilitating "Targeting Support Meetings" between schools and Local Authority attendance teams.

2. A Support-First Approach

The Trust prioritizes a "support-first" model. Schools work in partnership with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance, particularly for pupils with SEND or mental health challenges.

- **Listen and Understand:** Before escalating to punitive measures, schools must identify if absence is linked to school-induced anxiety or distress.
- **Preventative Environments:** To encourage attendance for pupils at risk of persistent absence, schools will provide "Safe Spaces" and reintegration support to help pupils self-regulate and feel secure on-site.
- **Attendance Contracts:** Formal written agreements will outline the specific support a school will provide. For pupils with complex behavioral needs, these will be integrated with Positive Behavior Plans to ensure a unified approach to the child's wellbeing.

For pupils with SEND, mental health challenges, young carers, or pupils with a social worker, schools utilise a 6-Step Data-to-Intervention Framework:

1. **Spot Pattern:** Identify drops in attendance or recurring patterns (e.g., frequent Friday absences) via Power BI. Inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker immediately in the case of unexplained absences.
2. **Listen & Understand:** Meet with parents to identify root causes, such as anxiety, young carer responsibilities, or transport issues.
3. **Formalize Support:** If voluntary help is unsuccessful, generate an Attendance Contract via Arbor to outline school support and parental expectations. Ensure that remote education is only used as a last resort, as part of a phased reintegration plan, and that the pupil is marked as absent during this time.
4. **Action Plan:** Seek multi-agency support for "Severe Absence" (pupils below 50% attendance).
5. **Monitor Impact:** Track daily attendance post-intervention using real-time dashboards.
6. **Evaluate:** Review data in the next cycle to determine the success of the intervention.

3. Data-Driven Intervention

The Trust attendance roadmap is to utilise real-time data to move from reactive reporting to proactive intervention.

Early Warning System: Schools monitor the "At Risk" band (91%–94%) and trigger "Nudge Data": A list of pupils whose attendance has dropped by 2% or more in a fortnight, or falls into the 91%–94% band.

Vulnerable Cohort Gap Analysis: We perform deep-dive analysis into the attendance of SEND and Disadvantaged pupils. We monitor the correlation between behavioral incidents and attendance dips to ensure vulnerable pupils are not being disproportionately impacted by school processes.

The Trust is working towards a "Single Source of Truth" model to ensure consistency and real-time accuracy across all phases. An overview of this Roadmap is:

- **Arbor MIS:** The primary data entry point for all schools. Raw data from Arbor populates both the national database and internal Trust dashboards.
- **Power BI Central Dashboard:** Connectivity directly to Arbor to provide live strategic oversight. It includes an Early Warning System to flag pupils in the "At Risk" band (91%–94%) and allows leaders to "drill down" from Trust-wide summaries into individual student profiles.
- **External Benchmarking:** Schools use the DfE "View Your Education Data" portal to compare performance against national averages, local authority benchmarks, and statistically similar institutions.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring Metrics

The Trust conducts termly Attendance Assurance Visits to audit performance against "Statutory Red Lines" and evaluate the impact of the Support-First strategy.

Key Metrics for Review:

- **Headline Figures:** Whole-school attendance, Persistent Absence (PA <90%), and Severe Absence (<50%).
- **Vulnerable Cohort Gap Analysis:** Comparing gaps in attendance data for SEND, Free School Meals (FSM), Children in Care (CiC/LAC), pupils with a social worker, or pupils who face other barriers to their learning (e.g., young carers).
- **"Nudge" Data:** Identifying pupils whose attendance has dropped by 2% in a fortnight or fallen below 95% in the last four weeks.
- **Geographic Heat Mapping:** Using postcode data to identify if transport issues or community-specific barriers are affecting attendance.
- **Statutory Red Lines:** Proving 100% of registers are closed within the mandatory 30-minute window via the "Register Lateness Monitor" and taken at the same time for all registered pupils.
- **Impact Tracking:** Using data to correlate specific interventions (e.g., Breakfast Clubs) with measurable rises in attendance.

4. Statutory Compliance and "Red Lines"

To ensure the safety of all pupils and meet legal obligations, the following "Red Lines" are non-negotiable across the Trust:

- **Register Accuracy:** All registers must be taken at the same time for all registered pupils, and legally closed within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- **Part-Time Timetables:** These are used only as a last resort, must be registered with the Local Authority, and must be reviewed fortnightly. They are never used as a sanction for behavior.
- **Medical Notification:** Schools must notify the Local Authority (via a Sickness Return) if a pupil is recorded with code I (illness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 consecutive school days or more, or if their total cumulative illness-related absences reach or exceed 15 school days within the current school year.

5. National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Trust adheres to the national framework to ensure a consistent approach to legal intervention.

The 10-Session Threshold: Schools must consider a penalty notice when a pupil has 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorized absence within a rolling 10-week period. This includes unauthorized holidays, lateness after the register has closed, and general unauthorized absence.

Notice to Improve (Mandatory Step): Where the threshold is met and support is deemed appropriate, the school will issue a formal "Notice to Improve" before a penalty notice is sought. This notice provides a final 3-to-6-week window for the parent to engage in support and secure sufficient attendance improvements as defined in the notice. If no improvement is demonstrated, a penalty notice may be issued.

Fine Structure:

- **First Offence:** £160 per parent, per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days, must be paid within 28 days).
- **Second Offence:** £160 per parent, per child (no reduction, must be paid within 28 days).
- **Third Offence:** A third notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period from the date of the first notice. The case must proceed to prosecution or other statutory legal intervention.