



Important Attendance Update and Guidance

Dear Parents and Carers,

At St Alban and St Stephen, we take attendance and punctuality very seriously. We aim to have an attendance figure of 95% or above. If your child's attendance drops below 95%, it means that they are missing 1 in every 20 sessions, which can have an impact on their attainment and wellbeing. Every moment in school counts, and days missed add up quickly. The Department of Education and our Local Authority monitor attendance very carefully and we have to report our attendance figures to them directly. As a school, it is our statutory responsibility to follow up on any absence. Regular attendance is vital so that children can achieve the very best that they can. Research has shown that:

- The higher a pupil's attendance, the more they are likely to learn, and the better they are likely to perform in exams and formal assessments. Data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.
- Being around teachers and friends in a school or college environment is the best way for pupils to learn and reach their potential. Time in school also keeps children safe and provides access to extra-curricular opportunities and pastoral care.
- Pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well. Students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

(Source: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/school-attendance-important-risks-missing-day/>)

As parents, you have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives a full-time education. Children should only ever miss school if:

- They are too ill to attend.
- You have asked in advance, and the school has given permission due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious holiday or festival.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it has not been arranged yet.

Absence due to these reasons will be marked as an 'authorised absence', although it will still be counted towards our child's total percentage of absences.

Absence for Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible, or during school holidays. If you are unable to make an appointment outside school hours, you will need to provide proof of the appointment to the School Office.

Absence for Illness

We understand and appreciate that children can become ill and it is not always easy to decide whether or not to send them into school. If you are unsure, please use the simple 'traffic light' guide below:

RED-Stay at home: Sickness and diarrhoea- 48 hours must have elapsed from the latest episode of vomiting or diarrhoea before your child can return to school. High temperature and feeling unwell. Contagious diseases- check the guidance for recommended periods to stay away from school. Covid-19 – following a positive test result for COVID-19, a child should not attend school for 3 days after the day of the test.(Government guidance updated February 2023)

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/children-and-young-people-settings-tools-and-resources>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1070910/UK_HSA-should-I-keep-my-child-off-school_guidance-A3-poster.pdf



St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Cecil Road, St Albans, AL1 5EG



"Learning and Growing with God by our side"

AMBER- Seek advice: Headache, feeling sick, tummy ache. Children may often experience some of these symptoms if they feel anxious, so if in doubt contact your GP or ask the school for advice.

GREEN- Come to School: Mild symptoms such as a cough, cold, runny nose, slight headache, feeling tired. We will always contact you if your child is feeling ill during the school day and their symptoms worsen.

If you have decided that your child needs to stay off school, you should phone the School Office as soon as possible to let us know, giving the reason for absence and when you expect your child to return. If your child has an illness, infection or other condition which may be contagious but does not require time off school eg conjunctivitis, threadworms, head lice, please inform the School Office and your child's class teacher.

If your child is struggling to come into school, please let us know and we will meet with you to explore the reasons and discuss what help can be put in place.

Requests for Absence

If you wish to make a request in advance for your child to miss school, please fill in an absence request form from the School Office. We are sympathetic to the wide range of reasons given and we appreciate the many demands of family life. However, we have a statutory duty to promote regular school attendance so that children do not miss school unless it is unavoidable. Every request for absence will be considered individually, considering the specific facts and background context. If a leave of absence is granted, the school will decide how long the pupil can be away from school. If a request for absence is not granted, this will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence'.

Absence will usually be granted for:

- Unavoidable hospital appointments
- Funerals/weddings of immediate relatives involving a short period of absence
- Musical instrument exams
- Visits/ interviews/exams at another school

Absence will not usually be granted for:

- Holidays / family days out
- Illness of other family members or pets
- Birthdays
- Funerals/ weddings of distant relatives/ friends involving more than one day of absence

Punctuality

The classroom doors open at 8.45 and the register closes at 8.55. After 8.55, your child will be marked late and will need to register at the main Office. Please ensure that your child is in school on time each day. Arriving in school punctually means that your child has a calm and settled start to the day, can take part in additional booster activities between 8.45 and 8.55 and will be ready to start their learning promptly at 8.55.

Thank you for working with us to provide your child with the best chances of success in school by ensuring that they are in school every day and arrive on time. If you would like any support or advice on attendance and punctuality, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will also send regular letters to parents of children with persistent absenteeism or poor punctuality inviting you in to school to discuss the support that we can put in place to help you.

Further guidance for parents from the Government can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Kind Regards,

Tess Hackett

Head of School

Peter Keane

Executive Head