

St. Anne's School
 Braye Road Alderney
 GY9 3XP
 Tel: +44 (0)1481 822173
 Email: office@alderney.sch.gg
 Website: www.alderney.sch.gg
 Email: headteacher@alderney.sch.gg
 Headteacher: Mr M A Winward



St. Anne's School
 ALDERNEY

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

Policy Directive and Guidelines

Document Control & History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Summary of Changes/Notes	Issue Date
1.0	03/22	Dir Ops (Ed.)		States of Guernsey Review date June 2022	03/22
1.1	03/22		S Parrilla	Formatting amendment in St Anne's School Colours	

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the States of Guernsey document control policy - original on [ConnectEd Intranet](#)

1.1. Policy Statement

St. Anne's School seek to provide high standards and high expectations for all to enable learners to realise their full potential and pursue a happy and fulfilling life. It is essential that all of the learners registered for school education attend regularly and on time and that they access all of the opportunities that education offers. The expectation is that all learners will achieve an attendance of at least 95%.

Learners who do not attend school regularly are at risk from a range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes including low attainment and social exclusion. The link between poor school attendance, poor academic achievement and limited life outcomes has been well established in national research and local data also reinforces the importance of school attendance in terms of attainment at GCSE.

The key principles which underpin the policy and procedures for managing attendance are that:

- Parents/carers whose children attend school have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually in order to get the most benefit from their education
- Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to the academic and social development that will improve the life chances of learners
- Learners who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging in anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own health, safety and welfare

1.2 Policy Objectives

This Attendance policy directive and procedures set out the requirements for the management of learner attendance and absence. They reflect statutory requirements, national guidance and good practice.

1.3 Policy Application

All schools² in Guernsey and Alderney must satisfy the statutory obligations relating to registration listed in Section 2.0. The further detailed direction provided within this policy and procedures applies to all States schools (including Catholic voluntary schools). Whilst this policy is primarily focussed on children of compulsory school-age, policy statements regarding holidays in term time also apply to Post 16 Provision at both the College of Further Education and the Sixth Form Centre.

² Both States and otherwise

Throughout this policy directive, 'Headteacher' refers to Heads of Service and the College of Further Education Principal, and 'school' refers to any education establishment.

The application of this policy is delegated to officers within Education Inclusion Services.

1.4 Accountabilities

Parents/carers have a legal duty under Section 17 of the Education (Guernsey) Law 1970 to ensure that any children of compulsory school age receive an efficient and suitable full-time education.

Headteachers are accountable for:

- Ensuring the maintenance of accurate school registers
- Ensuring the management of attendance at whole school level, in line with effective whole school procedures

Education Inclusion Services, on behalf of The Committee has duties to:

- Carry out checks on school attendance registers
- Serve a School Attendance Order on parents/carers who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school.

2.0 The Legal Framework

Section 17 of the Education (Guernsey) Law 1970 (the '1970 Law') places a legal duty on parents/carers of every child of compulsory school age (5-16)³ to ensure that they are receiving efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by attendance at school or otherwise⁴.

Under Section 20 of the 1970 Law, parents/carers who fail to secure their children's regular attendance (at school) shall be guilty of an offence and Education Inclusion Services has a duty to take appropriate action by serving a School Attendance Order on the parent(s).

In accordance with the Learners' Registration (Guernsey) Regulations, 1970, it is a statutory requirement for schools to:

- Maintain school registers
- Accurately record the presence or absence of all learners at the commencement of each morning and afternoon session
- Make their registers available for inspection by Education Inclusion Services

3.0 Managing School Attendance

Schools are in the best position to raise levels of attendance. Schools have the primary responsibility for promoting regular attendance and for dealing with poor punctuality and attendance in the initial stages. The most effective model for managing attendance is through clear registration systems and an active whole-school staged and escalating approach involving all members of staff.

Attendance is an important whole-school issue and needs to be managed by a senior member of staff within every school. The Headteacher, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), needs to ensure that the management of attendance at whole school level is achieved with clear roles and responsibilities for Form Tutors, Headteachers of Year and the relevant SLT member. The management of attendance must be based on effective whole school procedures which set out how attendance will be addressed both in terms of individual learners and as a whole school issue. The school attendance procedures should underpin all actions and promote and improve attendance and actions to address absence.

³ Compulsory school age is defined as the start of the term commencing on or after the child's fifth birthday, until the last Friday of June in the school year in which they reach 16 years of age (Section 16 of the 1970 Law, as amended by the Education (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law, 2009 and the Education (Compulsory School Age) (Guernsey) (No2) Ordinance 2008.

⁴ 'Otherwise' refers to educational provision that does not take the form of attendance at school. The majority of these cases will apply to learners who are being home educated or receiving individual tuition or having an individualised learning programme as prescribed by a Determination of Needs.)

Schools should consider carefully any use of exclusion in individual cases where regular and punctual attendance is an issue, as this may exacerbate and appear to condone or reward non-attendance.

The following guidance indicates the areas of responsibility for the Attendance Lead:

- Establishing whole school procedures, including staged, escalating systems and procedures for the management of attendance
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these procedures in the cycle of improvement
- Liaising with administration staff regarding communication from parents/carers regarding absence and procedures for the use of Group Call
- Collating and analysing data for the purpose of intervention and forward planning
- Liaising with Headteachers of Year, Form Tutors, Class Teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Behaviour Co-ordinator (BECO), Inclusion Lead, regarding systems, procedures and interventions
- Monitoring the accuracy of registers on a regular basis
- Issuing letters to parents/carers as a follow up to non-attendance and where there are concerns about levels of absence (see Appendix 3)
- Arranging school attendance meetings with parents/carers as part of the staged escalation procedures for the management of attendance (see Appendix 2)
- Meeting regularly with the designated School Attendance Officer (SAO) for the school to discuss whole school and individual cases including any new referrals
- Attendance at Education Inclusion Services Attendance Meetings (ESAM), when required
- Preparation of written reports and statements for legal purposes and representing the school in the Magistrates Court or the Child Youth Community Tribunal

The school prospectus should include a statement on parental responsibility for their child's school attendance, expectations regarding attendance and punctuality, guidance on notifying the school of learner absence, and holidays in term time. Factual information such as '90% attendance is the equivalent to half a day off school per week' and 'a child who has 10 days of holiday in term time can only achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance for that school year' could also be included.

The school procedures must include:

- Details of the systems for promoting attendance, recording attendance and absence and for addressing lateness and absence of all learners to ensure consistent implementation
- Details of a staged escalation process for the management of all categories of absence beyond first day calling (Group Call)

- Roles, responsibilities and contributions of the whole school community, including parents/carers
- The arrangements for monitoring of attendance and the measures that will be taken to tackle poor attendance, including the involvement of external agencies and the use of statutory powers
- Information for parents/carers on their responsibility for attendance and how the school will work with parents/carers
- A clear statement on the timing of the school day and for register closure (20 minutes after the start of the school session for both morning and afternoon)
- Details on the procedures for parents/carers to notify school when learners are absent
- Details of how and when the school will contact parents/carers as a follow up to school absence
- Procedures for dealing with notifications of holidays in term time (Appendix 4 provides an optional form for use by schools)
- Information about systems for working with the Schools' Attendance Service (SAS) on whole school initiatives and individual referrals
- Information for advising parents/carers who are concerned or may need additional support

Schools are in the best position to raise levels of attendance. Schools should consider the use of targets for individuals, classes and year groups to promote good and improving attendance. There are various schemes and systems that can be implemented and schools should contact their SAO to obtain further information.

Schools can draw upon advice from the SAS to establish and review their own procedures. The SAS has produced an Attendance Audit Checklist (see Appendix 1) and is able to support schools to develop their own procedures and practice.

4.0 School Data Analysis

School attendance data is held on a school's information management system (SIMS) and the school is responsible for the accuracy and maintenance of this data. Schools should analyse the patterns of attendance and absence on a regular basis. It is essential that the Attendance Lead uses this whole school data to determine how the school should address the attendance issues within their own context and to set meaningful targets for improvement and that these interventions are communicated and shared across the school.

Analysis of data should include consideration of:

- Patterns with particular subjects, classes or year groups

- Individual learners with punctuality problems, broken weeks of attendance or post registration truancy
- The attendance of different groups of learners such as Special Educational Needs (SEN), Looked After Children and other vulnerable groups
- Difference in attendance and absence of boys and girls
- Analysis of absence by registration code
- The number of learners having short but regular absences
- The impact of a few learners with very high levels of absence

This list is not exhaustive but includes examples of factors which the school should take into account. It is vital to analyse this data in order to identify areas for improvement. This enables different groups and strategies to be prioritised in order to improve attendance across the whole school as well as making effective use of resources. It is essential that the school communicates with parents/carers about attendance and absence. These communications must provide clear details and audit trails about school level action, as they may be needed at a later date to support legal intervention by the SAS.

It is of the utmost importance that school attendance records are entirely accurate and that school is in a position to demonstrate that every effort has been made to support learners who fail to maintain regular attendance at school. Factual information and records will need to be passed to the Law Officers of the Crown or the Children's Convenor with any referral that is made.

5.0 Attendance Registers

Schools are legally required to maintain accurate registers of attendance. Education Inclusion Services has a statutory responsibility to carry out register checks and the SAS is authorised by the Director of Education to inspect attendance registers.

Registers should indicate whether the learner is present or absent and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for absence or has accepted an explanation afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

Only schools (not parents/carers) can authorise absence and schools must adhere to Education Inclusion Services' guidance on Absence and Attendance Codes (Appendix 5) relating to authorisation.

Schools must record separately if learners are on an approved educational activity using the correct code. This will count as a present mark but for health and safety reasons it is recorded separately. Such activities might include work experience, field trips, sporting activities or Year 6 learners attending 'taster days' at their secondary school.

Schools must be aware that they are responsible for Child Protection and Health and Safety of learners in all of the circumstances described in the above paragraph. The Headteacher must ensure accurate registration procedures and regular communication between the school and staff responsible for the alternative provision, such as work experience, regarding attendance. If the learner does not attend the alternative provision, they should not be marked as present in the school register, and normal procedures for dealing with non-attendance should be triggered. **Schools must not complete the register using a 'blanket' code to cover certain days in each week in advance. Attendance data should be exchanged between the provider and school on a daily basis and the school register updated accordingly.**

Part-time programmes in school may only be agreed as part of a planned package which has been agreed at a School Action Plus SEN Review meeting, or School Attendance Stage 2 or 3 meeting, or Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting. Schools should not place learners on part-time timetables for an indefinite period. Any part-time timetable should be time limited and include a plan to return to full time within six weeks at the longest. Schools should monitor and review any plan at least fortnightly, with a multi-agency meeting at least six weekly in order to look at what is working and what is not and try to amend any plan to find a way forward. All part-time timetables must be notified to the SAS via minutes and a copy of the timetable. All sessions for which the learner does not attend school should be marked in the register with a 'C' (Other Authorised Circumstances –statistical meaning authorised absence. See Appendix 5.)

School registers will be monitored in a variety of ways by School Attendance Service Officers:

- By viewing registers, either at school or remotely
- By requesting attendance certificates from school

6.0 Individual Tuition

Learners engaged in an alternative provision programme of individual tuition, for example, delivered through an e-learning system, should remain on the roll of their school, with relevant codes (see Appendix 5) used as appropriate to record sessions.

7.0 Recording Absence

The Attendance policy for recording absence is in line with Guernsey Law. Implementation of this policy will ensure that should it become necessary for the States of Guernsey to use statutory power, the case will be robust.

Schools need to give careful consideration to authorisation of absence for some learners and the following guidance may be of help in making decisions concerning authorisation.

7.1 Authorised Absence includes:

- Illness, medical and dental appointments. Parents/carers should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours and ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible following the appointment. (See separate section for further explanation)
- Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school including exam entry for that school
- Study leave (only for learners in Year 11 and Year 13 who are undertaking public examinations). Study leave is not authorised absence but approved educational activity. Further information is included in Appendix 5, codes 'S' and 'X'.

7.2 Unauthorised Absence includes:

- Holidays in term time. Although Guernsey law does not preclude term-time holidays Education Inclusion Services and schools are able to express concern and disapproval of term-time holidays. Education Inclusion Services and schools do not have the power to prevent parents/carers arranging term time holidays for their children but holidays in term time are not a right and will not be authorised. For safeguarding reasons, if parents/carers do intend to arrange for their child to have holiday in term time, they will be required to notify the Headteacher in writing of their intention and the dates of the holiday. The form found at Appendix 4 can be used for this purpose; alternatively, schools may seek written (letter/email) notification from parents/carers and may make clear to parents/carers the impact that term-time holidays have on a child's attendance. When learners are absent from school for holiday during term time, schools are not obliged to provide and/or mark school work for the holiday period.

8.0 Medical Absence

The staged process for managing medical absence is as follows:

- When a learner is absent from school, parents/carers are required to contact the school on the first day of any absence with an explanation for their child's absence. Schools are able to operate a first day response system for those learners whose parents/carers have not contacted the school by using the automated Group Call System. A reason for the medical absence should be included as a note on SIMS. If parents/carers do not make contact with the school then the absence should be recorded as 'N' (no reason yet provided). As this is a temporary code it should be substituted after three school days at the latest with either an 'O' (unauthorised circumstances) or 'M' (authorised medical absence) if the absence extends to three days. **If the code 'M' is recorded then legally this represents that the school has accepted the parent's explanation for the absence due to illness (that is not COVID-19) or dental treatment**
- Where the school does not accept the reason for medical absence as being valid then contact must be made with parents/carers to discuss the reason for absence and inform them if the decision is to not authorise that absence. If the school has concerns about the frequency or duration of a medical absence then this can be discussed initially with the school nurse who may be able to offer advice or a drop-in appointment for the learner and/or parent
- When parents/carers make contact with the school they should be asked to provide a specific reason for absence and indicate when they anticipate that their child will be fit to return to school. Clearly, there are illnesses/medical reasons where the absence is likely to extend beyond three school days, and these should be recorded as 'M' authorised medical absence. Parents/carers are expected to keep the school informed of the reason for the ongoing absence from day one to day three in order for the school to continue to record the absence as 'M', authorised medical absence
- Where an absence persists beyond three days and there is no reason provided then the school should make direct contact either by phone or home visit with the parents/carers to discuss any difficulties which may be preventing the learner from attending. Once contact has been made, good practice would be to invite parents/carers into school to meet and discuss the difficulties. Any records of conversations/meetings between school staff and parents/carers should be kept on the learner's individual file and may be requested at a later date in the case of any future referral to the SAS, the Child and Youth Community Tribunal or the Law Officers.

- Where the illness absence persists beyond five days or where there are repeated medical absences which reach the threshold (three separate illness absences during a single half term period regardless of the length of each) then it is reasonable for schools to request that parents/carers provide medical evidence in support of their child's future medical absences from school. Evidence can take the form of medical certificates, medical notes and letters from medical practitioners, or appointment notifications. Whilst parents/carers are not legally obliged to provide schools with such documentation, they need to be aware that the absence of evidence could lead to future legal action being brought against them for failing to secure their child's regular school attendance (**providing that the school has not recorded all absences as 'M', authorised medical**). In any such proceedings one of the defences available to parents/carers is that their child's absences from school are due to genuine ill health. Proof of historical ill health can only be in the form of documents described above and without this evidence parents/carers will not have a statutory defence. Schools should discuss these health issues with the School Nurse.
- If there are regular short-term illness absences which reach the cumulative threshold of three separate illness absences within a half term that are not supported by medical evidence then the school should arrange a meeting with parents/carers to address the reasons for these absences. The most effective method of dealing with such school attendance meetings is to schedule them once every half term as a discrete group within the Stage 2 School Attendance Meetings and consideration should be given to involving the School Nurse in these meetings (See Appendix 2 for Stage 2 School Attendance Meeting)
- If a learner is known to have a medical / dental appointment at the commencement of a morning or afternoon session then this should be recorded as 'M'. If the appointment is during a session then the learner should be marked present at the start of the session and should use the school's signing out system to record when they have left school

9.0 Staged Approach to Attendance Management

The staged approach to attendance management is detailed in Appendix 2 and this should be followed by schools to ensure that there is a comprehensive process of management and intervention across the whole continuum of attendance management from school level, through the SAS to possible Child and Youth Community Tribunal or referral to Law Officers.

10.0 Home Education

Parents/carers have the right to educate their children other than at school. If a parent/carer decides that they wish to home educate then they must write to the Director

of Education. Contact will be made by the child's school (for those who are registered with a school) and if appropriate, an Education Development Officer (EDO) and an SAO will then arrange to make a home visit to confirm that the parent is able to provide an appropriate alternative education programme and that the home is a suitable environment for this programme. Schools should not remove a learner's name from the school roll until they are notified to do so by Education Inclusion Services.

11.0 The Schools' Attendance Service

The SAS works within the legal framework of the 1970 Law and is directly concerned with discharging legal obligations in relation to school attendance, welfare and employment of children. In particular, the SAS is concerned to ensure that the 1970 Law (which relates to the children of compulsory school age receiving full-time education) is applied fairly and equally for the benefit of learners. The SAS works in partnership with schools and with a wide range of other support agencies in order to support families and children in improving school attendance.

In order to ensure that registered learners of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually the SAS uses a number of approaches:

- Allocation of a designated SAO to each school
- Provision of strategic advice to schools in self-evaluation of attendance and in developing improved systems and policies for managing attendance
- Monitoring attendance through regular inspection of school records and liaising with the school Attendance Lead
- Gathering wider information on issues that impact on attendance, for example by researching the views of learners and parents/carers, being aware of information known to Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH)
- Participating in school meetings with parents/carers and learners, following staged and escalating intervention by the school
- Undertaking individual case work following staged and escalating intervention by the school
- Enforcing school attendance either through the provision of The Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970 or The Children (Guernsey & Alderney) Law 2008

The SAS will make routine visits to schools according to need and to meet a minimum schedule:

- Mainstream secondary schools will be visited once every week by the designated SAO in order to meet with members of staff responsible for managing school attendance

- Grant aided colleges will be visited once every half term in order that the school attendance records can be inspected and any concerns discussed by the SAO with a designated member of staff
- Primary and Special schools will be visited at least once every half term. The school is able to contact the SAO in between these scheduled visits should concerns arise

12.0 Process for Requesting SAS Individual Casework with a Learner

Schools have responsibility to promote, manage and monitor attendance and to respond appropriately to non-attendance.

Education Inclusion Services expects that the school will have implemented a variety of strategies and interventions in a staged and escalating process to attempt to improve the attendance of a learner including meetings with parents/carers and they will have made a written record of these interventions before a request is made for SAS involvement

Appendix 2 outlines the staged and escalating attendance management process, including the criteria, processes, actions and responsibilities for schools, Schools' Attendance Service and Education Inclusion Services in ensuring that the Education [Guernsey] Law 1970 is effectively discharged.

The SAS has two levels of work with individual learners and their families:

1. 'Known to the SAS'

All learners whose attendance is:

- At secondary school, below 85%
- At primary school, below 90%
- And/or whose punctuality is cause for concern

will be discussed by the school Attendance Lead and the SAO, for them to participate in the agreement of suitable next actions. Other pupils with higher levels of attendance, but whose pattern of attendance is of concern, may also be discussed with the SAO.

In some instances, the SAO may participate in a school-organised one-off meeting with parents/carers and/or learners. (Stage 2 or Stage 2 Continued of the Attendance Management Process). The school must inform parents/carers, with two days' notice, that the SAO will be meeting their child.

2. 'Active Casework with the SAS'

Requests for SAS casework involvement with a learner will be agreed between the school and SAO. Such requests will be made by the school completing a Request for Involvement form, which notes details about the learner and the processes already used by school to improve that learner's attendance. These learners will be considered to be '**Active Casework with the School Attendance Service**' (Stage 3 of the Attendance Management Process).

The main reason for a request for involvement for Active Casework will be:

- Despite school staff carrying out actions in keeping with their attendance procedures, attendance remains poor and/or there is persistent lateness
- and**
- A shared view that the SAO will be able to carry out work that will potentially lead to an improvement in attendance and/or persistent lateness

For all requests for involvement to be agreed, in keeping with the required stages of school level intervention, the school will have a robust record of key issues and the actions taken in relation to the learner's attendance.

13.0 How will the Attendance Policy be Evaluated?

If the policy directive is working, then the following outcomes would be expected:

- All schools will have attendance procedures in place
- All schools operating first day absence procedures with escalating staged approaches beyond this
- Schools actively promoting the importance of attendance
- Improved overall school attendance levels across the Bailiwick
- Improved attendance for vulnerable groups
- Schools having robust systems for collating, analysing and monitoring attendance data
- Improved attendance across primary, secondary and special schools
- Schools linking strategies for improving attendance to raising achievement with improved outcomes
- Reduced numbers of learners having attendance below 85% (persistent absentees)
- Reduced absence for holidays in term time
- Reduced numbers of learners having unauthorised absences
- Absences due to illness or dental appointments 'M' are reduced in number and as a percentage of overall absence
- Parents/carers understand their role in improving school attendance and are able to contribute to the strategy

- Reduced numbers of learners becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) when leaving Year 11

Appendix 1: Notification of Leave of Absence for Holiday (Optional Form for Use)



States of Guernsey
Education Inclusion
Services

Notification by Parent/Carer of Leave of Absence for Holiday During Term Time

The position on term time holidays is set out below. If a parent or carer intends to take their child out of school during term time to go on a holiday, for safeguarding reasons they should complete the form at the bottom of the page.

Position on Term Time Holiday

Education Inclusion Services and schools seek to provide high standards and high expectations for all to enable learners to realise their full potential. The expectation is that all students will achieve an attendance of at least 95%.

Although Guernsey law does not preclude term time holidays, they are not a right. Absence for holiday negatively impacts a child's attendance at school and, as such, Education Inclusion Services does not approve of them. (For example, a child who misses 10 days of school for a holiday can only achieve a maximum attendance figure of 95% for that school year. Additional leave for illness at any time during the year would drop the child below the expected level.)

Therefore, holidays in term time will **not** be authorised.

For safeguarding reasons, it is important that schools are aware of a child's whereabouts during term-time. Therefore, if parents/carers do intend to arrange for their child to have holiday in term time, they should inform the Headteacher of their intention and the dates of the holiday by completing the form below and returning it the school no less than two weeks before the date the period of absence is intended to start.

I am notifying you that (name of child): _____

Will be taking leave of absence from (name of school): _____

from (date): _____ to (date): _____

in order to take part in a holiday.

I understand that this absence will not be authorised by the school and will impact my child's attendance figure for the year.

Signature of parent/carers: _____ Date: _____

