

Lift Schools policies

Attendance Policy

Domain of application	Lift St James the Great
Review cycle	One year
Approved by	David Atter, Regional Education Director
Date of last review	September 2024
Date of next review	September 2025

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Role	Designated Person	Contact details
Senior attendance Champion	Lorraine Palache	lpalache@liftstjamesthegreat.org
Contact to report pupil absence	School Office	01732 841912
Contact for day-to-day attendance queries	School Office	01732 841912
Contact for detailed support on attendance	Lorraine Palache	L Palache
Contacting the local authority	Kent County Council	Link

1. Statement of intent

1.1. Good attendance is essential to improve pupils' chances of achieving their full potential, succeeding at school and improving their life chances. We define regular attendance as being in school on time for every day the school is open and believe that improving attendance is everyone's business. We are committed to:

1.1.1. Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

1.1.1.1. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

1.1.1.1.1. to age, ability and aptitude; and

1.1.1.1.1. to any special educational needs he/she may have;

1.1.1.1.2. either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.1.2. Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.

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- 1.1.3. Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- 1.1.4. Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the UN convention on the rights of a child.
- 1.1.5. Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the safeguarding and health and safety of our pupils.
- 1.1.6. Rewarding regular and improving attendance.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 2.1.1. Education Acts 1996 and 2002;
 - 2.1.2. Equality Act 2010;
 - 2.1.3. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
 - 2.1.4. The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
 - 2.1.5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007;
 - 2.1.6. The Children Act 1989;
 - 2.1.7. The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963;
 - 2.1.8. DfE 'Keeping children safe in education';
 - 2.1.9. DfE Working together to safeguard children;
 - 2.1.10. DfE (2016) 'Children missing education';
 - 2.1.11. DfE (2024) 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance';
 - 2.1.12. DfE (2019) Elective Home Education;
 - 2.1.13. DfE (2023) Providing remote education.

3. Definitions

Absence	Arrival at school after the register has closed. Not attending school for any reason.
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Authorised absence	Authorisation is granted for absence at the discretion of the school, in compliance with legislation and guidance. It could be granted for: Sickness. Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school hours. Religious or cultural observances. An exceptional family emergency.
Unauthorised absence examples	Parents keep children off school unnecessarily or without reason. Truancy. Absences which have never been properly explained. Arrival at school after the register has closed. Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays. Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed. (These will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances in compliance with legislation and at the discretion of the school) Leaving school with no explanation during the day.
Persistent absenteeism (PA)	Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason, regardless of authorisation.
Severe absenteeism (SA)	Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason, regardless of authorisation.
At risk of PA	Pupils whose attendance is dropping or at a level which makes it reasonably likely that they may become PA throughout the academic year.

4. Responsibilities of the trust

- 4.1. Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

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- 4.2. Ensuring there is a children missing education procedure in place and that this is regularly reviewed.

5. Responsibilities of the regional education director

- 5.1. Ensuring the implementation of this policy and procedures.
- 5.2. Monitoring attendance and ensuring high and/or increasing levels of attendance are maintained.
- 5.3. Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- 5.4. Having regard to 'keeping children safe in education' and 'working together to safeguard children' statutory guidance when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

6. Responsibilities of the principal supported by the senior attendance champion

- 6.1. Implementation and management of this policy.
- 6.2. Reviewing and updating the policy bi-annually to ensure it reflects local school procedures and is in line with our current model policy and national guidance.
- 6.3. Developing and maintaining a positive, inclusive culture that values cooperative working with parents, values and celebrates good and improving attendance and seeks to remove barriers to school attendance wherever possible.
- 6.4. Monitoring attendance and action planning to promote and improve attendance and punctuality.
- 6.5. Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance and any changes to attendance policy and procedure.
- 6.6. Ensuring that they keep abreast of changes in legislation and undertake CPD to ensure best practice.
- 6.7. Tasking a member of senior leadership to be 'school attendance champion'

7. Responsibilities of staff

- 7.1. Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

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- 7.2. Monitoring attendance and promptly discussing any concerns over attendance with parents and students.
- 7.3. Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- 7.4. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

8. Responsibilities of parents

- 8.1. Ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.
- 8.2. Ensuring that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- 8.3. Instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- 8.4. Ensuring that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- 8.5. Impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- 8.6. Working in partnership with their children's school and relevant partners to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- 8.7. Notifying the school if their child is absent. This should be done on the first day of absence as early as possible. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed when the child returns to school.
- 8.8. Avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- 8.9. Avoiding booking holidays during term time.
- 8.10. Contacting the school following procedures detailed below prior to any known, unavoidable term-time absence.
- 8.11. Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 8.12. Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- 8.13. Updating the school if their details change.

9. Responsibilities of pupils

- 9.1. Attending school, on time, prepared and ready to learn every day.

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- 9.2. Attending all expected lessons on time.
- 9.3. Following the school's code of conduct.

10. Absence procedures

- 10.1. Parents should contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence to explain why they were absent.
- 10.2. A phone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If the school is unable to make contact with the parent/carer, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who could reasonably be expected to be able to advise of the pupil's whereabouts.
- 10.3. The staff member will encourage the attendance of any pupil that they believe should be able to attend including those with minor ailments.
- 10.4. In the case of persistent absence, severe absence and at risk of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance staff. The school will inform the local authority (LA), on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.
- 10.5. The school will offer support to parents and pupils where there is an attendance issue, including engaging support from other appropriate agencies.
- 10.6. Where parents do not engage in this support and attendance fails to improve a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued and where this fails to secure improvement a penalty notice and /or prosecution may follow. (see section on notice to improve below)
- 10.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will contact the Local Authority and follow the 'Child Missing Education' guidance.
- 10.8. Where the family is believed on the balance of probabilities to have taken an unauthorised term-time holiday and the parent is unable to supply appropriate evidence to the contrary a local authority penalty notice/fine will be issued in compliance with the 2024 statutory guidance.

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- 10.9. Where there is a significantly high level of illness absence that is not explained by the acknowledged symptoms of a specific medical diagnosis, parents may be requested to provide medical appointment evidence for all illness before further illness authorisation is given (no evidence will result in an unauthorised absence (O code)).
- 10.10. This will be used to indicate the severity of the absence through illness, encouraging parents that this is unusual and requires appropriate medical scrutiny.
- 10.11. Where there are concerns that the absence of a child constitutes a risk of harm, safeguarding procedures will be followed as per the Safeguarding Policy.

11. Attendance register

- 11.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session as a minimum. This register will record whether pupils are present or absent.
- 11.2. Pupils' legal attendance is defined as attendance or absence at a morning session and attendance or absence at an afternoon session and attendance after registers close will be treated as an absence according to the statutory guidance.
- 11.3. Lesson attendance marks may be used to identify truancy within the school day
- 11.4. The school uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.
- 11.5. Please see Appendix A for further details of registration codes and Appendix B for local arrangements for school registration.

12. Pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism (PA)

- 12.1. The school will:
 - 12.1.1. Track attendance data in school at least half termly to target key groups of pupils needing support;
 - 12.1.2. Use a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance;
 - 12.1.3. Rigorously, fairly and supportively use agreed escalation procedures including:

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- 12.1.3.1. Sending letters to parents;
- 12.1.3.2. Having a regular review;
- 12.1.3.3. Engaging with LA attendance teams;
- 12.1.3.4. Using fixed penalty notices, notices to improve and prosecution as appropriate;
- 12.1.3.5. Holding parental meetings;
- 12.1.3.6. Hold attendance reviews and panels in line with escalation procedures.
- 12.1.4. Ensure pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who need a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences;
- 12.1.5. Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps;
- 12.1.6. Meet with pupils and parents to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems;
- 12.1.7. Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support;
- 12.1.8. Lead regular check-ins with pupils to review progress and the impact of support;
- 12.1.9. Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.

13. Punctuality

- 13.1. The school will:
 - 13.1.1. Actively encourage high levels of punctuality.
 - 13.1.2. Monitor and follow up on lateness.
 - 13.1.3. Promote school times and the time of registers opening and closing through brochures and the website.
 - 13.1.4. When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L).

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- 13.1.5. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and a parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as an 'authorised absence' for that session using the correct code (eg. M, C, etc.).
- 13.1.6. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (code U).

14. Term time leave of absence

- 14.1. Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 14.2. The principal will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 14.3. The principal will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in highly exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the principal will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 14.4. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis
- 14.5. Requests for leave will not be granted immediately before and during assessment periods or within the first couple of weeks of term.
- 14.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the principal, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty notices and fines.
- 14.7. See Appendix B for local arrangements for requesting leave of absence.

15. Missing children

- 15.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the principal.
- 15.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
 - 15.2.1. The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Senior Leadership Team immediately.
 - 15.2.2. A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the

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school premises as directed by a member of the senior leadership team.

- 15.2.3. Staff will then search the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- 15.2.4. If the pupil has not been found, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- 15.2.5. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- 15.2.6. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- 15.2.7. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is designated as 'Looked After', or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 15.2.8. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 15.2.9. The principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 15.2.10. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 15.2.11. The principal will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 15.2.12. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy

16. Appointments

- 16.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2. Where this is not possible, the school may ask to see some form of evidence such as an appointment card or hospital letter.

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- 16.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will need to be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 16.4. Pupils should attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

17. Part-time timetables

- 17.1. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education in school. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's physical or mental health needs. DfE guidance is very clear about the reasons why a part-time timetable might and might not be used. We only make use of part-time timetables in exceptional circumstances and in full compliance with the DfE guidance.
- 17.2. In particular:
 - 17.2.1. Any part- time timetable will be time-limited and will not be treated as a long term solution.
 - 17.2.2. It will have a target expiry data, after which a full time return to school will be expected.
 - 17.2.3. Part-time timetables will only be used to support a pupil's physical or mental health needs. They will not be used as a tool for managing behaviour.
 - 17.2.4. Part-time timetables will only be made with parental agreement and in compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.
 - 17.2.5. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C2 or X for non-compulsory school age pupils).

18. Penalty notices

- 18.1. Our use of penalty notices follows the statutory guidance on the national framework for penalty notices. (Working together to improve school attendance 2024 p.56 onwards)
- 18.2. Parents whose children fail to attend school regularly are committing an offence (Section 444 Education Act 1996). Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school, an agreed alternative learning provision or engage in agreed home tuition.

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- 18.3. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, unauthorised holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school or where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.
- 18.4. The threshold to consider issuing a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (A school week is any week in which there is at least one school session). This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence and does not need to be consecutive. The 10 week period can span different terms or school years.
- 18.5. In individual cases the school and the local authority may move to issue a penalty notice where the threshold has not been met. This might apply, for example where several term time leaves of absence (mini holidays) are taken separated across the year so that they do not meet the threshold or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events Local authorities may also issue penalty notices related to truancy sweeps.
- 18.6. In such cases, the school will:
 - 18.6.1. Consider if support is appropriate for the case.
 - 18.6.2. If support is given and is not working or being engaged with then a notice to improve may be issued or a penalty notice.
 - 18.6.3. If improvements are not made under notice to improve then an application for a penalty notice will be issued to the Local Authority. The local Authority may feel that prosecution is more appropriate in certain cases.
- 18.7. Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period but the second penalty notice will be charged at a higher rate than the first. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- 18.8. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Following this, prosecution or other attendance legal interventions may be incurred. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. Notices may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

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- 18.9. Any payments are to be paid directly to the local authority and if fines are not paid by the end of 28 days, the local authority may decide to prosecute.
- 18.10. For full information on penalty notices, please contact the local authority using the contact at the beginning of the policy

19. Notice to improve

- 19.1. A notice to improve is a final, formal opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued in line with processes set out in the local authority's local code of conduct and is led by the local authority.
- 19.2. It should include:
 - 19.2.1. Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
 - 19.2.2. The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
 - 19.2.3. Details of the support provided so far.
 - 19.2.4. Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
 - 19.2.5. A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
 - 19.2.6. A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
 - 19.2.7. Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
 - 19.2.8. The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.
- 19.3. Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended.

20. Removal from school roll

- 20.1. A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)

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(England) Regulations 2024. Removal for any other reason could constitute off-rolling and cannot be removed retrospectively.

- 20.2. A return will be made to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6) except when a pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in year 6 or Year 11.

20.3. Compulsory School age: Regulation 9(1)

- 20.3.1. Ground A - pupil has been registered fully at another school
- 20.3.2. Ground B - pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery
- 20.3.3. Ground C - pupil is dual registered and the other school agrees deletion
- 20.3.4. Ground D - pupil has an attendance order changed to name another school
- 20.3.5. Ground E - pupil has a school attendance order revoked
- 20.3.6. Ground F - Parent of pupil has notified school in writing pupil is leaving to be educated otherwise than at a school (eg. Elective Home Education)
- 20.3.7. Ground G - pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school
- 20.3.8. Ground H - pupil has not returned following a leave of absence (ten school days)
- 20.3.9. Ground I - pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days
- 20.3.10. Ground J - pupil is detained under a sentence of detention (criminal)
- 20.3.11. Ground K - pupil has died
- 20.3.12. Ground L - pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue to 6th form
- 20.3.13. Ground O - The pupil has been permanently excluded from school

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20.4. Not of compulsory school age: Regulation 9(3)

20.4.1. Ground A - pupil will not attend school again

20.4.2. Ground C - pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days

20.4.3. Ground D - pupil has died

20.4.4. Ground E - pupil has been permanently excluded from school

20.5. For fuller description of grounds for deletion from roll see [Working together to improve school attendance pages 64-75](#)

21. Appendix A: attendance register codes

21.1. Attendance (present) codes

Code	Name
/	Present am
\	Present pm
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
B	Educated off site
P	Approved, supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
L	Late before the registers have closed

21.2. Authorised absence codes

Code	Name
I	Illness (physical and mental health related)
M	Medical appointments (when unable to book them out of school hours)
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded and no alternative provision made

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R	Religious observance
S	Study leave during public examinations agreed in advance
T	Traveller absence for occupational purposes where dual registration is not possible
J1	Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Part time timetable agreed absence
C	Other authorised circumstances

21.3. Unauthorised absence codes

Code	Name
G	Unauthorised family holiday
O	Unauthorised other absence
U	Late after the registers have closed
N	Reason for absence not yet established (turns to O code after day 5)

21.4. Not counted in attendance or absence figures

Code	Name
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend school
D	Dual Registered at another school and expected to attend the other provision
Q	Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

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Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause
#	Planned whole school closure
Z	Not on roll

22. Appendix B: school local arrangements

23. Arrangements for taking the registers

- 23.1. The school opens for pupils at 8.40am.
- 23.2. The registers are taken from 8.50am in the morning.
- 23.3. In the afternoon, the registers are taken from 1.00pm for KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2.
- 23.4. Registers close at 9.20 in the morning and 1.20pm for KS1 and 1.35pm for KS2 in the afternoon. Any pupils that arrive after these times will be recorded as 'late after the register is closed' which is an absence mark. Please see the DfE coding in Appendix A.

24. Requesting leave of absence

- 24.1. Please ask at the office for a form.

25. Local arrangements for missing pupils

- 25.1. The member of staff to notify about a missing pupil is Lorraine Palache.
- 25.2. The length of time required to complete a school search prior to notifying parents is 30 minutes.

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26. Rewarding good and improving attendance

- 26.1. The school acknowledges good attendance in a number of ways: weekly class prizes, improved attendance certificates, termly attendance certificates and badges.