



Adlington St. Paul's CE Primary School

Headteacher: Mr. A. Houghton



Attendance And Punctuality Policy 2026

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.'

Colossians 3 v23

Our vision “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.” (Colossians 3:23)

Community • Hope • Compassion • Forgiveness • Perseverance • Respect

Policy information	Details
Academic year	2026-2027
Reviewed	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or earlier if statutory guidance changes
Policy owner	Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion
Applies to	All pupils on roll, including pupils below compulsory school age

1. Vision, purpose and principles

Adlington St Paul's CE Primary School is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school. Our vision calls us to pursue excellence with compassion, ensuring every child is known, welcomed and supported to belong, participate, learn and thrive.

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' educational progress, wellbeing, friendships, safeguarding and wider life chances. The school expects every pupil to attend every session for the full duration of that session unless there is a statutory reason for absence.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend. We will apply high expectations fairly and consistently while considering individual circumstances, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), medical needs, mental health, caring responsibilities, family circumstances and our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Aims

- build a whole-school culture in which attendance is everyone's responsibility;
- set clear expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- identify emerging patterns early, before absence becomes entrenched;
- work in partnership with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers;
- provide reasonable adjustments and targeted support where needed;
- reduce persistent absence and severe absence, particularly for vulnerable groups;
- maintain accurate electronic admission and attendance registers; and
- use formal support and legal intervention fairly, consistently and only when appropriate.

3. Statutory framework and linked guidance

This policy has regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. It should be read alongside:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444;
- Education Act 2002, section 175;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice;
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions;
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school;
- Children missing education statutory guidance; and
- Lancashire County Council's local code of conduct for education penalty notices.

4. Key contacts and responsibilities

Role	Named contact / responsibility
Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion	Mr Andy Houghton - strategic leadership, policy, authorisation of leave, data oversight, family support and liaison with governors, the Trust and local authority.
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr Luke Miles - supports safeguarding responses where absence or inability to make contact raises a welfare concern.
School office	Day-to-day reporting of absence, first-day contact and register administration. Tel: 01257 480276; bursar@adlingtonstpauls.lancs.sch.uk
Class teachers	Take registers accurately and consistently; welcome pupils back; notice patterns; share concerns promptly; support reintegration and catch-up.
SENCo / inclusion leadership	Advises on SEND, medical needs, reasonable adjustments, targeted provision and multi-agency support.
Governing Body	Promotes attendance, reviews data and vulnerable-group trends, challenges leaders and monitors the impact of the policy and IMF-funded provision.
Learning Together Trust / Local Authority	Provides challenge, advice, targeting support meetings, multi-agency coordination and legal intervention where appropriate.

5. Expectations

5.1 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every day the school is open, arrives on time and is ready to learn;
- notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of an unexpected absence, giving the specific reason, and update the school each day unless otherwise agreed;
- provide at least two up-to-date emergency contact numbers wherever reasonably possible;
- make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible and provide appointment information when requested;
- work with the school to understand and address any barriers, attend meetings and engage with agreed support;
- request any leave of absence in advance and understand that holidays are not normally exceptional circumstances; and
- inform the school promptly of changes to address, telephone numbers, family circumstances or other information relevant to attendance and safeguarding.

5.2 Pupils

- attend every session and arrive punctually;
- take part in agreed check-ins or attendance plans;
- tell a trusted adult if something is making attendance or arrival difficult; and
- support a welcoming culture in which others feel safe and that they belong.

5.3 School staff

- treat pupils and families with dignity and assume positive intent while maintaining high expectations;

ADLINGTON ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

- take registers at the agreed time and use attendance codes accurately;
- follow up unexplained absence promptly and escalate safeguarding concerns;
- share relevant concerns with the Senior Attendance Champion, DSL team, SENCo and other leaders;
- use warm, personalised and practical communication, with named routes to support;
- recognise improvement sensitively without stigmatising pupils affected by illness, disability or complex need; and
- make reasonable adjustments and support successful reintegration after absence.

6. The school day, registration and punctuality

School day. The compulsory school day runs from 8:45am until 3:15pm, Monday to Friday. This is 32.5 hours each week.

Session	Register opens / taken	Register closes	Late coding
Morning	The school day begins and the register is taken at 8:45am.	9:15am	Arrival after 8:45am but before 9:15am: L. Arrival after 9:15am: U unless another absence code is more appropriate.
Afternoon	Register is taken at 1:00pm.	1:05pm	Arrival after 1:00pm but before 1:05pm: L. Arrival after 1:05pm: U unless another absence code is more appropriate.

Morning register closure. The register closes at 9:15am, 30 minutes after it begins to be taken. Arrival after that point is recorded as absence using code U unless another absence code is more appropriate.

Pupils arriving after the start time must report to the school office with their parent or carer, where the time and reason will be recorded. Repeated lateness will be reviewed and the school will contact families to understand the cause, agree practical support and set a review point. Five or more late sessions in a half term will normally trigger written contact or a meeting, but school may act earlier where a pattern or safeguarding concern is identified.

7. Reporting and following up absence

7.1 First-day response

1.

Parents or carers contact the school as early as possible on each day of absence, unless a longer period has already been agreed.

2.

Where no reason is received, the school office will contact parents or carers on the first day, normally before 10:30am.

3.

If contact is not made, the school will use other emergency contacts and consider contact with relevant professionals, including a social worker where appropriate.

4.

If the absence remains unexplained, contact will continue. A home visit and/or police welfare check may be considered according to risk. Safeguarding procedures take precedence over a fixed timetable.

5.

The reason and appropriate code will be entered as soon as it is established and no later than five school days after the session. If no reason is established, code N will be amended to code O.

7.2 Safeguarding and children missing education

Unexplained or repeated absence can be a warning sign of neglect, abuse, exploitation or other harm. Staff will consider the child's vulnerability, known risks, siblings, social care involvement and the family's circumstances. Concerns will be shared with the DSL team and external agencies in line with safeguarding procedures. The school will make required local-authority returns, including for pupils absent without authorisation for ten consecutive school days and pupils expected to miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

8. Understanding and supporting absence

8.1 Early identification - Inclusive Mainstream Fund approach

Attendance and belonging is the school's first Inclusive Mainstream Fund priority for 2026-2028. We will not wait for a pupil to reach the persistent absence threshold before responding. The school will use:

- fortnightly early-warning reviews to identify decline in individual pupils, cohorts and year groups;
- analysis of punctuality, days and sessions missed, reasons and attendance codes;
- close monitoring of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker or looked-after status, young carers and any locally significant groups;
- pupil voice to understand when school feels easiest or hardest and what would help;
- supportive family meetings focused on barriers and practical solutions;
- a consistent named adult for brief mentoring or check-ins where helpful;
- co-produced individual attendance plans with clear actions, owners and review dates;
- soft-start or meet-and-greet arrangements for pupils who find arrival difficult;
- targeted morning support, such as breakfast or a calm start, where a specific barrier has been identified; and
- sensitive recognition of personal improvement, resilience and engagement rather than only perfect attendance.

8.2 Graduated attendance response

Stage	Typical school response
Universal - expect and welcome	Clear routines and messages; accurate registers; first-day contact; positive relationships; a curriculum, behaviour culture and pastoral offer that promote belonging.
Early concern - listen and understand	Prompt conversation with pupil and family; check attendance pattern and context; identify in-school and out-of-school barriers; agree small practical actions and a review date.
Targeted support - facilitate	Named adult; individual attendance plan; reasonable adjustments; SENCo/DSL/pastoral input; morning or reintegration support; referrals or whole-family/early-help support where appropriate.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, work with the local authority on an attendance contract, Notice to Improve or education supervision order as appropriate.
Enforce	Where support is inappropriate, exhausted, unsuccessful or not engaged with, consider a penalty notice or prosecution in line with the national framework and Lancashire code of conduct.

8.3 Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence means missing 50% or more. These thresholds trigger intensified review; they are not targets and do not prevent earlier action. For pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence, school will meet with the pupil and family, agree and review a plan, coordinate relevant services and involve the local authority. Where absence is severe, safeguarding and children's social care involvement will be considered particularly carefully.

8.4 SEND, disability, health and anxiety-related absence

The school will maintain the same ambition for all pupils while recognising that support may need to be different. We will consider reasonable adjustments, pastoral and SEND support, medical advice, a phased reintegration or a temporary part-time timetable only where exceptional and in the pupil's best interests. A part-time timetable must be time limited, agreed with the parent, have a clear route back to full-time education and be regularly reviewed.

Medical evidence will not be demanded routinely. It may be requested where school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness, where absence is repeated or long term, or where evidence is needed to arrange support. Evidence may include appointment cards, prescriptions or other information and need not always be a doctor's note.

Remote education is not a routine alternative to attendance. It may be used only as a last resort, for a limited period, and as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil into face-to-face education.

9. Monitoring, analysis and governance

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure attendance is reviewed frequently and that actions are followed through. Monitoring will include:

- weekly patterns and immediate operational follow-up;
- fortnightly early-warning review of individual pupils;
- half-termly, termly and annual analysis of attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, punctuality and codes;
- comparison by year group and relevant cohorts, including SEND, disadvantaged pupils, young carers and pupils with a social worker;
- benchmarking against local, regional, national and similar-school data;
- evaluation of interventions using attendance trends, pupil and parent voice, case studies and participation data; and
- termly reporting to governors and alignment with the School Improvement Plan and Inclusive Mainstream Fund Strategy.

10. Authorised and unauthorised absence

10.1 Illness

Parents should keep a child at home when they are too ill to attend and provide a clear reason. Minor illness or anxiety does not automatically mean a pupil should remain at home; families are encouraged to speak to school so that safe support can be considered. The school will use NHS and public-health guidance when advising families.

10.2 Medical and dental appointments

Routine appointments should be made outside school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend before and/or after the appointment. Leave will be limited to the time reasonably necessary. Code M is used only where leave has been granted for the appointment; if the pupil is present at registration and leaves later in the same session, no absence mark is required for that session.

10.3 Religious observance

Absence may be authorised for a day set apart exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Additional days will be considered individually and may be unauthorised.

10.4 Leave of absence and holidays

A parent with whom the pupil normally lives must request the school's official Leave of Absence Request Form from the school office and submit the completed form in advance. The Headteacher will consider every application on its individual facts, circumstances and relevant background. There will be no automatic or blanket authorisation for a particular event. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the permitted length.

Term-time holidays. The DfE does not normally consider a need or desire for a holiday or other leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively.

Where a request is refused and the pupil is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school may request a penalty notice or other legal intervention in accordance with section 12.

10.5 Approved educational activity and off-site provision

A pupil may be recorded as attending an approved educational activity only when the activity is educational, approved by the school, takes place during the session and is supervised as required. The school will record the nature of the activity, ensure suitable safeguarding arrangements and require the provider to notify the school of any non-attendance.

11. Attendance register and national codes

The school keeps the admission and attendance registers electronically. Registers are legal records and will be retained and amended in accordance with the 2024 Regulations. Amendments will show the original entry, amended entry, reason, date and person making the amendment.

The following is a concise operational summary. Staff must use the full July 2026 statutory guidance where a code is uncertain.

Code	Use	Statistical category
/ \	Present at school (morning / afternoon)	Attending
L	Late arrival before the register closes	Attending
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity

U	Arrived after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on the admission register	Administrative
#	Planned whole-school closure	Administrative

Code	Use	Statistical category
P	Participating in an approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience	Approved educational activity
B	Attending another approved educational activity	Approved educational activity
D	Attending another school where dual registered	Approved educational activity
C1	Leave for regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
M	Leave for medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
J1	Leave for interview for employment or admission to another institution	Authorised absence
S	Leave for study for a public examination	Authorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend	Not a possible attendance
C2	Leave for compulsory school-age pupil on temporary part-time timetable	Authorised absence
C	Leave for other exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
T	Travelling parent - pupil travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
I	Unable to attend because of sickness	Authorised absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision	Authorised absence
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Transport normally provided is unavailable	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Whole school premises unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Attendance contrary to public-health guidance or law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause of an emergency nature	Not a possible attendance
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established (maximum five school days)	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence

12. Formal support and legal intervention

12.1 Attendance contracts and Notices to Improve

Where voluntary support has not secured improvement or has not been engaged with, the school and local authority may formalise support through an attendance contract or education supervision order. A Notice to Improve will usually be used as a final opportunity to engage with support before a penalty notice where support is appropriate, except where support would not be appropriate, such as an unauthorised holiday.

12.2 National Framework for Penalty Notices

All state-funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a pupil reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive, may include different types of unauthorised absence, and may span terms or school years. The school will consider each case individually, including:

- whether support is appropriate and has been provided;
- whether a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance and change parental behaviour;
- whether another intervention would be more appropriate;
- the family's circumstances and the school's Equality Act 2010 duties; and
- Lancashire County Council's code of conduct.

Offence within rolling 3 years	Penalty per parent, per child
First penalty notice	£160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 22-28 days.
Second penalty notice	£160 payable within 28 days; no reduced rate.
Third or subsequent offence	A further penalty notice cannot normally be issued; the case may proceed to prosecution or another legal intervention.

There is no statutory right of appeal against a penalty notice. Non-payment may lead to prosecution for the original offence. The school does not issue penalties automatically and cannot grant leave retrospectively.

13. Positive attendance culture and reintegration

The school will promote the benefits of attendance through everyday relationships, curriculum, worship, assemblies and communication with families. Messages will focus on the child's learning, friendships, belonging and experiences, not only percentages. Individual attendance information will be communicated privately.

Recognition will be inclusive and sensitive. The school may celebrate strong attendance, improvement, resilience or engagement, but will avoid approaches that shame or disadvantage pupils whose attendance is affected by disability, illness or complex circumstances.

When a pupil returns after absence, staff will welcome them, provide necessary information and catch-up support, restore routines and avoid public questioning. Where needed, a reintegration plan will include a named adult, reasonable adjustments, a gradual but time-limited return and regular review.

14. Complaints, confidentiality and review

Questions about attendance coding, leave decisions or support should first be raised with the Headteacher. If unresolved, the school complaints procedure may be used. Attendance information will be handled in line with data-protection law and shared only where lawful and necessary, including for safeguarding, statutory returns and coordinated support.

This policy will be published on the school website, shared with new families, and highlighted at the start of each academic year and when updated. It will be reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, local arrangements or school circumstances change. Pupil and family views will inform review.

15. Key external references

[Working together to improve school attendance - July 2026](#)

[Lancashire County Council - education penalty notices](#)

[NHS - Is my child too ill for school?](#)

Appendix 1 - Punctuality concern letter

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have noticed that [child's name] arrived after the start of the school day on [number] occasions during the last half term. Arriving late can make the start of the day unsettling and may mean missing important teaching, routines and time with friends.

We would like to work with you to make mornings easier. If there is anything getting in the way - transport, sleep, anxiety, family routines or another concern - please contact the school office on 01257 480276. We can arrange a conversation with a member of staff who knows your child.

We will review punctuality with you on [date]. Thank you for working with us to help [child's name] arrive calmly and ready to learn.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andy Houghton

Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

Appendix 2 - Early attendance concern letter

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have noticed that [child's name] has now missed [number] days / [number] lessons this academic year and that their attendance is beginning to decline. We are getting in touch early because [child's name] matters to us and we want them to feel connected to their class, friends and learning.

There may be a straightforward explanation, or there may be something making attendance difficult. Please contact [named member of staff] on 01257 480276 so we can listen, understand what is happening and agree any practical help. This could include a meet-and-greet, a named adult, support with the morning routine or an individual attendance plan.

We will review this together on [date].

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andy Houghton

Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

Appendix 3 - Attendance support meeting letter

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

[Child's name] has attended [percentage]% of possible sessions and has missed [days/sessions]. This is now [at risk of persistent absence / persistent absence / severe absence]. We know absence can have complex causes, so we would like to meet with you and [child's name, where appropriate] to understand the barriers and agree a support plan.

Meeting date and time: [insert] Named contact: [insert] Location / telephone option: [insert]

At the meeting we will consider what is getting in the way, what helps, reasonable adjustments or services that may be needed, who will take each action and when the plan will be reviewed. If voluntary support does not improve attendance or is not engaged with, the school may need to formalise support with Lancashire County Council and consider legal intervention. Our immediate aim is to work in partnership and help [child's name] return successfully.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andy Houghton

Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

Appendix 4 - Leave of absence decision letter

[Date]

Dear [parent/carers name],

Thank you for your request for [child's name] to be absent from [date] to [date]. I have considered the individual facts, circumstances and background you provided.

The request has been authorised for [number] sessions under attendance code [code]. [Child's name] is ☐ expected to return on [date].

The request has not been authorised because [reason]. Any absence taken for this purpose will be ☐ recorded as unauthorised. [Child's name] is expected to attend school throughout this period.

If unauthorised absence reaches 10 sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period, the school must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. This threshold can include other unauthorised absence and late arrival after the register closes, and can span terms or school years.

If you believe relevant information has not been considered, please contact me before the proposed absence. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andy Houghton

Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Parent information: penalty notices

- The national threshold for consideration is 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period.
- The threshold may be met by any combination of unauthorised holiday, unexplained/other unauthorised absence and late arrival after the register closes.
- For a first offence within three years, the penalty is £160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty within three years is £160 per parent, per child with no reduced rate.

- A third or subsequent offence within three years will not normally result in another penalty notice and may proceed to prosecution.
- A Notice to Improve will usually be offered where support is appropriate, but it is not required for cases such as unauthorised term-time holiday where support is not appropriate.
- Lancashire County Council issues notices and there is no statutory right of appeal. Questions about the school's decision should be raised with the Headteacher.

Appendix 6 - Individual attendance and belonging plan

Purpose A short, co-produced plan that identifies the barrier, agrees practical support and keeps one consistent named adult involved. Review quickly and adapt if it is not helping.

Plan information	Details
Pupil / class	
Parent/carer	
Named adult	
Plan start date	
Review date	
Current attendance / punctuality pattern	

What we understand	Notes
What is getting in the way?	
What helps?	
When does school feel easiest / hardest?	
Pupil view	
Family view	

Agreed action	Who?	By when?	How we will know it helps

Review

What has improved? _____

What remains difficult? _____

What will we continue, change or stop? _____

Next review date: _____

Pupil: _____ Parent/carer: _____ Named adult: _____