



Attendance Policy

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St George's Academy recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on our website to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the head teacher and directors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which could impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Rationale

St George's Church of England Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We aim to support pupils and their families so that excellent attendance can be attained.

- Our current school target for attendance is 95%.
- At St George's, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.



Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Aims

- to maintain and improve the overall attendance of children at school
- to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- to raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- to ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents/carers, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- to keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- to ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- to identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them
- to work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Unauthorised absences in term time may result in a fixed penalty from the LA.



Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.55am will be marked as late in the attendance register. Records are kept of those pupils who are late and this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. The beginning of the day is often the most important where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify the school of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the register. It is important that the school receives accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence, this information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where the school has not received reasons for a child's absence parents will be contacted requesting this information. If no further information is received then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and the school has not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, a first day contact process will be initiated. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when the school may be unaware why the child is absent and so parents will be contacted to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness which means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will work in partnership with the parents to support the family with the help of additional external services



Parental Request for Leave of Absence from School

Leave of absence from school will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

A Leave of Absence request form should be completed by parents/carers if required and handed into the school office with any associated evidence.

Leave of Absence requests are reviewed fortnightly and parents are then informed of the outcome.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and the directors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters or telephone conversations.

There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to consider further action.

The Local Authority will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

The school's Education Support Officer visits once a week to check and monitor attendance. She carries out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance and works with the school to improve attendance

Procedures for attendance/punctuality:

Daily

- Class teachers to complete morning and afternoon session registers. The registers are closed 15 minutes after the start of each session.
- Parents are requested to contact the school as soon as possible if their child is absent.
- Admin assistant to make a record of any child who is late for school
- Admin assistant to conduct 'First Day Calling' and record reasons for absence if the parent has not contacted the school
- Office staff to follow up any missed marks with class teachers.
- Office staff to refer any pupils with no reason for absence provided on the fifth day to the head teacher who will then contact Children's Access Point (CAP).

Weekly

- Office staff to monitor attendance and inform class teachers of any significant changes.
- Class attendance certificate and trophy presented in assembly.
- Attendance display updated to show year group attendance rates.



Weekly (cont.)

- Education Support Officer to analyse registers to identify any concerns
- Education Support Officer to lead on any issues ie low attendance letters, late letters, meetings with parents, referrals for penalty notices, etc
- Education Support Officer and head teacher to review and decide outcomes on Leave of Absence requests
- Education Support Office to update Office Staff and head teacher on interventions for current target pupils.
- Education Support Officer to submit a regular report to the head teacher

Monthly

- Monthly 100% Attendance Draw and presentation in assembly
- Education Support Officer conducts 'Late Gates'.

Termly

- Head teacher submits an Attendance Report to the Board of Directors

Annually

- Annual Attendance Awards (Certificates for 100% attendance)

Parents/carers:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible (by 9:00am on first day of absence).

If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach-aches etc. parents/carers should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to come and collect them.

If pupils have a dental, doctors or hospital appointment, parents/carers should let the school know. Where possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments.

Pupils should miss as little time as possible away from school. Therefore, parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day
- promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons
- not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child
- provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school if no previous discussion has been noted
- work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child. This includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may affect the child's learning



Children at risk of missing education

The school will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system ie home education.
- have ceased to attend the school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they attended
- transferred to another school
- have a medical condition where they are unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- have been permanently excluded

Children Missing Education

If the school suspects a pupil is 'missing' and there are existing child protection concerns, the school must make a referral to the relevant social care team immediately.

Where the school is sure a pupil has left but has been unable to establish the education provision that the pupil is attending, or where the pupil has been missing for 20 school days or more the school should complete an online CME form.

Off-rolling of pupils

The trigger for off-rolling a pupil is when they have left the school. However the school only does this when confirmation of the date on which the pupil was placed on-roll at a new school has been provided.



Appendix A

Attendance registers must be taken in all classes at the start of the morning session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. On each occasion staff must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances