

ST GEORGE'S C E FIRST SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY



Reviewed: March 2016
Attendance Manager: Headteacher
Education Welfare Officer: Julie Davis

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To recognise that good time keeping and attendance at school is a key requirement for good progress in learning, supporting our school aim of 'Nurturing confident, healthy, responsible citizens who are enabled to realise their potential' and our Christian value of 'responsibility'.
- To ensure that attendance is a priority for everyone associated with St. George's, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- To maintain effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance.
- To challenge the attitudes of those parents, pupils and staff who give a low priority to attendance and investigate any underlying causes for poor attendance.
- To inform parents in order that they may cooperate with the systems and procedures of the policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy. All staff and governors will lead by example and all teaching staff will work to raise levels of enjoyment and commitment to learning.

INTRODUCTION

Our school views non attendance as a serious matter. We recognise that all cases are different and that there is no standard path that can be followed in applying intervention strategies. The school is committed to working closely with the Education Welfare Officer to take early action to improve attendance. In some cases, prosecution may be used as the last resort when other intervention strategies have failed to bring about an improvement in school attendance. The school headed note paper reinforces the importance of attendance by incorporating the motto 'Every Child Matters, Every Day Matters'.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular school attendance or by education otherwise (see guidance issued by Worcestershire LA).

The arrangements for reporting absence are described in the school prospectus, the Nursery and Reception handbooks, letters to parents and during Foundation Stage induction meetings. These forms of communication also remind parents of their responsibility and raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on their child's attitude and attainment. We aim to stress the importance of good attendance from Nursery/Reception onwards, even if children have not reached the age of 5, in order that good habits are established from the start.

We also have a 'parent-friendly' mini policy on Attendance and Punctuality available for all parents in the entrance lobby.

REGISTRATION

Documents to refer to for statutory requirements and guidance in regards to completing and maintaining attendance register:

- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006
- Absence and Attendance Codes DCSF
- Keeping Pupil Registers DCSF.

Schools have a statutory duty to keep two legal documents:

- An admissions roll
- An attendance register which must be kept accurately.

Teachers are required to take a register at 8:55 am and again at 1:00 pm. The school uses the SIMS attendance module; teachers record attendance directly onto the SIMS system using the SLG. Blank copies of class lists are kept in register folders for use by supply staff and in case of electronic failure. A print out of the current attendance codes are to be found in the register folders. Register folders must be sent to the office after assembly and after afternoon registration. The office staff produce a printout of pupil numbers in each class every morning and afternoon in case of evacuation eg. fire drill.

If the pupil is not in school by 9:20am and no reason for absence has been received then the school will text home to request that parents/carers inform school of the reason for absence. If no response to texts is received for three consecutive days, the Headteacher will telephone or write a letter. The EWO will follow up any concerns with a visit.

Children who are late, after classes have come into school, are entered into a Late Book which is kept in the office. The Headteacher writes to the parents of children who are persistently late.

POOR ATTENDANCE

Those pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be closely monitored and further action considered. Between 95% and 90% it is the responsibility of the class teacher to discuss the matter with the pupil and if appropriate the parent/carer, in consultation with the Headteacher and administrative staff. Further intervention will be required if attendance is at 90% and below. All intervention must be documented.

Recognition of a pattern of absence is vital. Liaison between class teachers, Key Stage Leaders and Education Welfare Officer with support from the Headteacher will ensure a holistic approach to the cause for concern. Early involvement of the parent/carer is paramount.

St. George's has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance at the school:

- Conversations about the concern
- Letters to parent/carer
- Home visits
- Meetings with parent/carers and/or pupils to discuss any issues
- School mentoring
- Parenting contracts
- Pastoral support plan
- Individual educational support plan
- Pre-prosecution meeting County/parent/carer/child/school.

If there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance following the school's interventions, the school will refer the matter to the Worcestershire County Council Senior Education Welfare Officer for Prosecutions for advice and possible legal action.

The legal action to be considered in full consultation with St. George's:

- To prosecute a parent/carer for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends school to the statutory requirement through the Education Act 1996, section 444(1 or 1A)
- Application to Magistrates Court for an Education Supervision Order – to ensure that the child of compulsory school age and registered at a school attends regularly
- Application to Magistrates Court for a Parenting Order – to enforce regular attendance following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority
- Penalty Notice issued for an instant monetary fine - for irregular attendance.

FAMILY HOLIDAY REQUESTS DURING TERM TIME

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they deem it to be exceptional circumstances.

Only the Headteacher at St. George's has the discretion to authorise leave and this will be considered on an individual basis.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents/carers cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.

Parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

A child may be removed from the school register if they have been continuously absent for a period of twenty school days, in accordance with the 2006 Education Regulations.

PROCEDURE

In the interests of safeguarding, parents/carers should arrange an appointment with the Headteacher then complete a Request for Leave form and submit this to the office at least six weeks prior to the requested absence. St. George's will respond in writing to the request within a fortnight.

Parents/carers should be made aware that any unauthorised absence in respect of leave will be referred to the Worcestershire County Council Education Investigation Service for Prosecution, for appropriate intervention. School registers will be marked as follows:

Pupil should be marked H (authorised absence) for the agreed period of leave

Pupil should be marked G (unauthorised absence) if the period of leave has not been authorised or for days taken in excess of an agreed period.

REMOVAL OF PUPILS FROM THE REGISTER

A child may be removed from the school register if they have been continuously absent for a period of twenty school days, in accordance with the 2006 Education Regulations. The local Authority will be informed for safeguarding purposes.

TRAVELLERS

There is provision within the legislation to permit Travellers to remove their child/children from full time education whilst they are travelling, however this can only be done after the completion of 200 sessions (100 days) in an academic year. The parent/carer must attend school and discuss the pending period of absence with the Headteacher prior to removing the child. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise this absence or not. Should permission be granted 'T' will be entered into the pupil register system.

COLLATING AND ANALYSING ATTENDANCE DATA TO IDENTIFY TRENDS AND ENABLE ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Teachers should inform the head teacher if any patterns of absence are noted or if they suspect truancy. The Headteacher will meet twice each half term with the EWO to discuss attendance and to use print outs from the computer system to monitor the % attendance of pupils. Any concerns will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Attendance registers will be printed at the end of each month, checked, data errors resolved and added to the register folder for each class.

Summary reports (group analysis by attendance codes) are printed termly or as needed to monitor % attendance by class groups and trends. The results may trigger further action.

At the end of the year the attendance data for the full year will be analysed to ascertain the patterns and reasons for absence. Actions to target areas of concern/poor attendance will be discussed and agreed.

Persistent absence will trigger a parental contact by the Headteacher. If attendance does not improve, a visit from the EWO will follow. Persistent absence will result in official warning letters and eventual court action to improve attendance.

REVIEW MEETINGS BETWEEN EWO AND HEADTEACHER

These will take place twice each half term. The attendance of pupils with less than 90% attendance will be investigated. Pupils causing concern will receive a letter highlighting the poor attendance. A visit from the EWO will follow if the attendance situation does not improve. Reviews and subsequent action will be documented. Discussions may be held about the need to work with or access other agencies, especially social care and health.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Weekly 'Donkey Derby' and 'Race to Space' Powerpoint presentations identify the winning class for attendance and punctuality. Each week the class that achieved the highest percentage attendance the previous week will be presented with the Attendance Trophy in assembly, to be kept for the week. Classes are congratulated in newsletters to parents.

Certificates are presented at the end of each term at a full assembly to those children who have had full attendance. At the end of the year a special certificate and badge will be presented for full attendance through the year and this achievement will be publicised in a parents' newsletter. This publicly values and celebrates children's achievement.

Attendance Weeks and 'Get in line it's ten to nine' weeks are held to encourage good habits.

ACCESS TO ATTENDANCE DATA

Class teachers have access to data for pupils in their class. Individual attendance reports can be printed out on request. Attendance sheets for children with attendance below 90% are shared at parents' evenings.

All teachers and administration staff have access to attendance data held on the SIMS system. The EWO also has access to the data during her regular visits. Access is by user name and password log in.

Parents have access to the stored attendance data for their son/daughter on request. Attendance summary sheets are shared at Parent Consultation meetings and are sent out with the summer report.

The school will share any relevant concerns about the attendance of any child who is leaving to transfer to another school, including transfer to middle school.

TARGET SETTING

The Governing Body sets an annual target for attendance and this is communicated to parents.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Safeguarding children's welfare is of the utmost importance when monitoring pupils' attendance. Any safeguarding concerns should immediately be reported to the Designated Senior Leader for Safeguarding (see Safeguarding Policy).

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Our procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education are based on the LA and LSCB procedures. We will ensure that we follow these procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. We will ensure that we report children missing education to the LA CME officer, in line with statutory requirements.

Attendance Policy - Appendix 1

Attendance procedure notes

Each class teacher has a blue attendance folder. The folder should be returned to the office immediately after morning and afternoon registration.

All notes from parents should be kept in the envelope provided and the reason for absence recorded on the electronic register.

A pupil is late (L) if he/she arrives at school before registration closes at 9:20am. After 9:20am the pupil is marked with 'U' i.e. late after registration closes.

Pupils who come to school after 8:50am must report to the office so that their name and time of arrival can be entered in the 'Late Book'.

The office staff will print out a register at the end of each month and put it in the register folder so that class teachers can look for patterns of absence. The blue folder will also contain a print-out of the medical information held on the computer for the pupils in each class.

If class teachers are unable to resolve any concerns they might have about the patterns of attendance for any pupil in their class, they should report the matter to the Headteacher for discussion with the EWO.

In case of fire, the Office Manager will take register folders, class totals, 'Late Book', 'Sick Book', 'Signing in Book' and 'Staff signing out/in form' to the assembly point on the playground.