

Attendance Policy

St. George's is a community of happy, confident learners who shine.

“Let your light shine”
Matthew 5: 16



Approved by:

Date: November 2022

Last reviewed on:

November 2022

Next review due by:

September 2023

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1. Aims

To ensure pupils and their parents or carers feel safe, welcome, and supported and to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance, at St. George's our whole-school culture and ethos values good attendance, by:

- Promoting good attendance. We want all children to aim to have attendance of 100%.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled, which includes arriving on time for school every day.
- Building strong partnerships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

Good patterns of attendance at school are essential to ensure the safety, health and success of children. At St. George's improving attendance is in everyone's interests and is everyone's business. We work in partnership with parents or carers so that St. George's is a community of happy, confident learners who shine.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Board (LGB)

The Local Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher (Marie Bradbury) is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices and referring to the Local Authority for legal action where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (Marie Bradbury) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff
- Working with the education welfare officer to tackle persistent and severe absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Marie Bradbury and can be contacted via the school office on 01527 62263 or email: office@sgf.endeavourschools.org

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office every morning by 8.50am and every afternoon by 1.00pm. Class teachers will pass messages from parents regarding attendance to Office staff.

3.5 School office staff

All school office staff will:

- Take calls, receive messages and read and respond to emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school's Arbor system
- Elicit from parents and carers the reason for their child(ren) being late for school and offer motivational support in order to improve punctuality
- Contact parents and carers of children who are absent as soon as possible after the start of the school day to ascertain the reason for their child(ren)'s absence
- Where appropriate transfer calls from parents to the senior leader with responsibility for attendance so they can provide parents with more detailed support on attendance

The senior administrator will:

- Prepare and circulate correspondence to parents relating to attendance
- Call and arrange attendance improvement meetings with parents and carers
- Take minutes of attendance improvement meetings/type up attendance improvement plans
- Work with the senior leader with responsibility for attendance to monitor and analyse data
- Update the weekly attendance slides and share them with parents and staff via the noticeboards
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report any concerns to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer and the designated senior leader responsible for attendance by providing them with reports and other information as required
- Submit notifications for irregular attendance, part-time timetables, joiners and leavers to Worcestershire Children First via the Children's Services Portal

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day from 8.45am until 3.10pm
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return. The school phone number is 01527 62263 and the email address is: office@sgf.endeavourschools.org
- Provide the school with 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Notify the school of any changes in their contact details on Arbor (via the Parent Portal) or via the school office
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work in partnership with school staff to bring about improvements in attendance or punctuality

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day from 8.45am until 3.10pm

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. The register is a legal document.

We will take our attendance register by 8.50am each morning and by 1pm each afternoon. We will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken by 1.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by phoning the school (01527 62263) or emailing: office@sgf.endeavourschools.org (See also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity or seriousness of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as evidence of a doctor's appointment or prescription. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will normally be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

To notify the school, please speak to a member of staff in the office or at the gate the day before the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent or carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Each week, children who arrive at school by 8.45am every day will be rewarded with two Golden Tickets (see Behaviour Policy)

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register closes at 9.15am, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L – late before register has closed – authorised)
- After the register has closed at 9.16am or later, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U – unauthorised absence)
- A member of office staff will talk to the parent or carer to elicit the reason for the child arriving late to school and record this, along with the number of minutes they are late on the Arbor system.
- Where there are ongoing punctuality issues, office staff will offer advice and motivational support to improve punctuality.
- If a child is frequently late, that is, arrives late for school 3 times or more in a 3-week period, the school will write to the parent or carer, clearly explaining the amount of learning time that has been lost, what this equates to in terms of lessons and the impact this has on their child.
- If, after a 3-week period of monitoring, the child continues to arrive late, the parent or carer will be invited to attend a face-to-face meeting with the class teacher and the designated senior member responsible for attendance.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent or carer as soon as possible after 8.50am on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, we regard it as a safeguarding concern. We may therefore undertake a home visit to ensure the child is safe and well, contact a Social Worker or contact the Police for them to do a safe and well check.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent or carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer a Social Worker or the Police.
- If a child is absent for 10 days or more, we are required to notify Worcestershire Children's First that a child is missing in education (CME) via the Children's Services Portal. If the absence continues for a further 10 days we re-submit the notification.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents and carers can access 'live' information about their child's attendance via the Parent Portal App in Arbor.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via a copy of their child's attendance certificate on a half-termly basis.

Appendix 3 shows the relationship between % of attendance and number of school days/weeks missed.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We celebrate good attendance at every opportunity:

- > We welcome children back to school after a period of absence and check in with them to ensure that they have been safe and are well.
- > Every Monday morning in assembly we celebrate the classes who achieved the highest rates of attendance in the previous week, the number of children who achieved 100% attendance in the

previous week and the classes with the fewest late arrivals in the previous week. This information is also displayed for parents and staff to see.

- > We reward children who are in school, on time every day each week with two Golden Tickets.
- > We recognise the children and parents or carers where improvements in attendance and punctuality have been made.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

At St. George's we:

- > Monitor attendance and absence data every 3 weeks, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- > Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data is collected every day and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Governing Board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- > Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide tailored or formalised support to these pupils and their families
- > Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns. For example, if historically there have been certain weeks within the school year, where attendance has been low, we will have a focused attendance week to avoid that pattern repeating itself or if there is an emerging picture of a child having certain days of the week off, we will work with the child and their parent or carer to identify the underlying reasons why and seek to address any barriers.
- > We use absence information proactively e.g. if we notice that a child has had an appointment to renew their passport, we will write to parents or carers to remind them to take holidays during breaks from school, of the possibility that they will be fined and of the term/holidays for the remainder of the year.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- > Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- > Follow the escalation processes outlined in the flow chart in Appendix 2. This shows the thresholds, roles and responsibilities and escalation procedures for tailored and formalised support. The attendance panel comprises of the Designated Senior Member of Staff for Attendance (DSA), the senior administrator may also involve other members of the SLT such as the SENDCo or EYFS leader or external partners.
- > Tailored support begins once a child's attendance drops below 93%. At this stage the staff concerned take an emphatic, supportive approach and seek to listen and understand the reasons for poor attendance and the barriers to a child attending school regularly. With the parents or carers we will make a plan to bring about improvements in attendance. Attendance improvement plans may involve other agencies and organisations e.g. housing, the school nurse, the educational

psychologist and/or a family support worker. The emphasis at this stage is on working in partnership with parents to provide support e.g. we may write to a Doctor or medical professional to explain the impact that a poorly managed condition such as asthma is having on a child's education.

- If tailored support does not bring about the required improvements, the school will move to a formalised approach. This will involve the Education Welfare Officer and other partners. This could also include a parenting contract, an Education Supervision Order, the involvement of social care, or the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance e.g.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. A leave of absence form must be completed and can be obtained via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

7.2 Legal sanctions

We endeavour to work in close partnership with parents to avoid the need for legal sanctions to be imposed.

The school or local authority can fine or prosecute parents or carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Section 23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007 states that "Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school".

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute under section 44(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice has been issued in error.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority may pursue the matter in court.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence". The court may fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order or impose an Education Supervision Order.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil in Year 10 or 11 is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified and accepted that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as

	absence	agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site or part of it is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Relationship between attendance % and number of days/weeks missed:

Number of days absence	Equivalent number of school weeks	% attendance over the year
0		100%
1		99.5%
2		98.9%
3		98.4%
4		97.9%
5	1	97.4%
6		96.8%
7		96.3%
8		95.8%
9		95.3%
10	2	94.7%
11		94.2%
12		93.7%
13		93.1%
14		92.6%
15	3	92.1%
16		91.6%
17		91%
18		90.5%
19		90%
20	4	89.5%

Appendix 3: Monitoring and improving attendance at St. George's C of E First School

