



Attendance and punctuality policy

"Let your light shine" Matthew 5:16

St. George's C of E First School and Nursery is a community of happy, confident people, who are empowered and inspired to excel.



Approved by:

Date: 11.03.2020

Last reviewed on: 11.03.2020

Next review due by: 30.09.2020

Contents

1. Aims and objectives	2
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	7
6. Attendance monitoring.....	8
7. Roles and responsibilities	8
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	10
9. Links with other policies.....	10
Appendix 1: attendance codes	11

.....

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 Aims:

Attendance figures at St. George's have required improvement for the last seven years because they have been consistently below the national average of 95.8% in 2017 - 2018. Attendance at St. George's in 2017 – 2018 93.6%, in 2018 – 2019 there was a significant improvement in attendance and this figure rose to 95.2%. **The main aim of this policy is to create and embed a more ambitious and positive culture of high levels of attendance at school from Nursery to Year 4 and beyond. At St. George's we aim for each child to have attendance of 97%.**

As a result:

- Pupils at St. George's will have increased access to good quality educational experiences and are therefore best placed to achieve the highest standards.
- There a culture of all children arriving at school on time and ready to learn each day is established and maintained.
- There is a whole school approach, involving pupils, parents, all staff and governors to improving the culture of attendance and punctuality at St. George's.

1.2 Objectives:

Good attendance and punctuality habits among pupils and parent/carers from Nursery and Reception upwards will be established and maintained.

All pupils will be aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality habits and we will work with and support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

All staff will be clear about their role and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality and will act early to address any patterns of absence.

All Governors will be clear about their role and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved 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 at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

3.2 Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

There are 190 school days in a year. This means that there are 175 other days for holidays, birthdays, days out and other activities. In order for your child's attendance to be 97% or more, they have to be in school for 185 days. This allows for up to 5 days for an occasional illness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice and evidence such as an appointment card, letter or text message must be shown to a member of the administration team in order for these absences to be authorised.

We encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. The number of minutes they are late and the reason why will be recorded on the SIMS system.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If a pupil is late, a text message is scheduled to go to the parent/carer the following morning at 7.30am to prevent further lateness and promote punctuality. For children who are frequently late, we write to parents each month, informing them of the number of minutes of learning time that have been lost and what this equates to in terms of lessons. Within this letter we also outline the benefits to the child and their classmates of arriving at school on time every day.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Each day, before 10.00am a member of administrative staff prints off a list of children who are absent on that day and this is viewed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. If the absence is recorded as an N (no reason provided) the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher give clear direction(s) to administrative staff about the course of action to be taken, typically this is as follows:

If the child(ren)'s attendance is:

	At 10.00am	By 10.30am	By 11.00am	At some point during the day
95% or better	A text message is sent		Follow-up phonecall	
Between 90% and 95%	A phonecall to the primary contact	If no reason has been provided follow up phonecalls to all named contacts.		
Below 90%	Phonecalls to all the named contacts	If no reason has been provided by 10.30am messages are left saying that unless contact is made by 11.00am a home visit/'safe and well' check will take place		If there is no response two members of staff will undertake a home visit or contact the local PCSO to see arrange for a 'safe and well' check to be carried out.

If any pupil has been absent with or without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more, the school will notify Worcestershire County Council via the Children's Services Portal (via "In Year Admissions and Transfers" and "10 day absence form"). We will then be contacted by Worcestershire County Council to determine the most appropriate course of action to ensure the child concerned is safe and free from harm.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We report to parents on their child's attendance record at Parent/Teacher consultation meetings in the Autumn and Spring term and in their child's annual report at the end of the school year.

If we have a child's attendance falls below 96% we write to parents informing them that we are beginning to have concerns about their child's absence and the impact this is likely to have on their child's attainment, emotional well-being and friendships.

If a child's attendance falls below 94% we write to parents informing them that we are now very worried about their child's attendance the negative effect this will have on their child's attainment, emotional well-being and friendships.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% we monitor their attendance in school on a weekly basis. If there is no improvement over a three week period on our behalf, the EWO writes to the parents and invites them in for a meeting to discuss the situation and how we can work together to improve their child's attendance patterns.

We always strive to work with and support parents in meeting their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. For example:

- We sometimes agree to collect children for a fixed number of days if the (the parent) is unwell or otherwise unable to bring their child to school.
- We sometimes agree to children having free access to Breakfast Club provision if, for example, the parent has started a new job and has no-one else to bring their children to school.
- We sometimes broker contact between parents/carers who live close to one another so that a shared drop off/collection arrangement can be made between the parents/carers concerned.
- We sometimes agree to a slightly later drop off time or entry to school via a different entrance area if a parent/carer needs to avoid contact with other parents/adults.

At the end of each school year we write to the parents of children who had attendance below 90% to promote better attendance patterns the following school year.

If a child does not return to school within the first 5 days of the start of the new school year we write to parents stating the impact this will already have had on their child's attendance, achievement, friendships and how well they settle into their new class and remind them of the importance of their child's attendance improving over the course of the term/year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- terminal illness or death of a family member;
- funeral of a close relative;
- wedding of a close relative if there is a valid reason for holding the wedding during term time;
- if a family member serves in the Armed Forces;
- difficult family situations where there would be a negative effective on the overall welfare of the child if leave of absence was not granted.

In considering requests in 'exceptional circumstances', the Headteacher considers the following factors:

- the age of the child(ren);
- if the child or main carer(s) have serious medical conditions that mean they are only well enough to travel/undertake activities that might require leave of absence in term time for very limited periods of time;
- time of the academic year when the leave has been requested;
- duration of the absence – number of school days being missed;
- the child's current attendance and punctuality rate;
- exceptional term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose;
- whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday;
- have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school;
- impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEND;
- the impact that the absence will have on the child;
- whether it falls within the window for any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, except where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested;
- holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At St. George's attendance is promoted at every opportunity...

In our weekly Fantastic Friday assemblies the "Attendance Bear" and "Punctuality Penguin" are awarded to the classes with the highest attendance and fewest late arrivals respectively.

On a half-termly basis certificates are awarded to children with good attendance (i.e. above 97%) and to children who have had improved attendance.

Each half-term, the attendance button is reset for all children and at the end of the half-term all children with attendance above 97% are invited to a reward party and the children have opportunities to decide what activities are included in the reward party.

There is a prominent display in the school's entrance which is updated twice a year. The display reflects the positive effects of good attendance habits and the negative consequences of poor attendance and celebrates good attendance patterns.

Where we are very concerned about the attendance or punctuality of an individual child/family we work with their parent(s)/carer(s) to put in place individual reward systems to promote improvements e.g. if they attend every day for a week they can ride their bike to school or take the school guinea pigs home for the weekend.

See also sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

6. Attendance monitoring

At the current time, the Headteacher/attendance lead, monitors the attendance of children whose attendance has fallen below 90% on a daily and weekly basis. When a senior administrator is appointed, this responsibility will become part of their role. All members of SLT have a group of children who are at risk of being persistent absentees within the current school year for whom they are responsible for monitoring the attendance of. If attendance does not improve the SLT member responsible for that child will intervene, meet with the parent(s)/carer(s) to put in place an attendance improvement plan.

The Education Welfare Officer currently visits the school every three weeks/twice per half-term to monitor school attendance and pupil absence.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). If a child is ill, their parent(s)/carer(s) are expected to call the school each day to keep us up to date with the situation.

If a pupil's absence goes above two days we will contact the parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise the Education Welfare Officer will become involved.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Senior Administrator

The Senior Administrator will:

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Work with Education Welfare Officer and the Headteacher to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss attendance issues
- Send letters to the parent(s)/carer(s) of individual pupils

7.4 Class teachers and teaching assistants

Class teachers and teaching assistants are responsible for:

On a daily basis:

- Accurately complete attendance registers (on sims or paper based if sims is not working), using the correct codes promptly at the start of each morning and afternoon session
- Once the register has been completed do a head count to ensure that the number of children in the room correlates with the number of children marked present on the register;
- Establish and maintain a positive, caring and warm relationship with each individual pupil that lasts from the moment they walk through the classroom door to the moment they go home, every day for the whole academic year and beyond.
- Welcome children back to school after a period of absence e.g. "I am so glad you are feeling better/are back at school... it's lovely to see you... I have really missed you."

On a weekly basis:

- Award two 'Golden Tickets' to all children who attendance HEROs (Here, On time, Ready, Every day i.e in school on time everyday each week).
- Celebrate any punctuality party that is awarded with gusto and sincerity.

On an ongoing basis:

- With the class establish a culture where attendance and punctuality is valued and seen as important e.g. how many people are here today, so far this week, everyone has been here every day – that means we could be on track for 100% attendance/winning the attendance bear, actively tracking and reducing the number of late arrivals each day/week e.g. last week we had 8 lates let's see if we can get it down to 5 this week.
- Notify attendance lead if a child whose attendance/punctuality causes concern is absent/late.
- Keep children in school for as long as possible e.g. if they are complaining of feeling 'mildly' poorly try to 'gee them up' so that they keep going.
- Follow up on actions agreed in relation to attendance or punctuation concerns with the attendance lead.

On a termly basis:

- Share attendance information with parents openly and honestly at Parent's Evenings, via annual pupil reports.

7.5 Office/Reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Print off an absence list by 10.00am each day and show it to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Follow up on the actions as outlined in section 3.5.
- Scheduling and sending text messages to the parent(s)/carer(s) of any children who are late.
- Completing and sending out letter(s) as outlined in Section 3.6.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed in September 2020 by the Attendance Lead/Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy and Behaviour 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 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 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 absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as 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 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