

# St George's C of E School



## Short Version - Attendance Policy and Procedures

<b>Policy Author:</b>	<b>Black Pear Trust Deputy Heads</b>
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## Key Contact

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At **St George's C of E School**, we want all students to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils want to be is important to us. We will work together with you as parents to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

### **Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?**

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil's all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

<b>If attendance over the school year is:</b>	<b>...a pupil will miss this many days:</b>	<b>...and this many lessons:</b>
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence and every consecutive day of absence until the child returns to school – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via a text message prompting parents/guardians to call the school office by 10:00am. After this time, if a call has not been received, the school office will contact, contact 1 and then contact 2 of the parent/guardian via a telephone call. If contact is still not made, this is followed up again following the afternoon register and is recorded on Scholar Pack. If no contact is received after the third consecutive day of absence without reason, two members of staff including a member of the senior leadership team will carry-out a safe and well check to ensure the child and family are safe. If there is no answer, a letter will be left requesting immediate contact with school and written notification of absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10** school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for all future absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation – following the local authority missing in education guidance.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, a letter will be sent; the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned from an agreed period of extended leave, or is absent from school with authorisation for 20 consecutive days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **Absence Requests**

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.**

Only in very, very exceptional circumstances will absence requests be authorised.

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence will be unauthorised if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)
- If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

- Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution.

## **Support for School Attendance**

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

If your child does not want to attend school, please speak to the class teacher or the attendance officer. We can then support you to get your child into school.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an **individual health care plan** and we will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

If your child requires an individual health care plan, please contact the attendance officer to support you with this.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being.