The Black Pear Trust

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

THE BLACK PEAR TRUST

ST GEORGE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

APPROVED BY:	Local Governing Committee	**DATE: 28/09/26**
LAST REVIEWED ON:		
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY:		
SIGNED:		
NAME:		

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A. ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

St George's Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

School attendance lays the vital foundations of a child's life. To this end, St George's Primary School seeks to ensure that all its children receive a full-time education, suitable to their age, aptitude and ability, which maximises opportunities for each child to realise their potential. To gain the greatest benefit from their time at St George's Primary School it is vital children attend regularly and on time. We would always encourage children to strive for 100% attendance by attending every day the school is in open for instruction, providing they are fit and well enough to do so. In order to support this, we adopt a whole school approach to school attendance and will engage with families to identify, address and overcome barriers to attendance and learning.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some children find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils, parents and carers.

The school recognises that persistent absence, severe absence and repeated periods of absence may be indicators of wider safeguarding concerns, including neglect, child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), mental health needs, serious violence, family circumstances, and children missing education (CME). Attendance information will therefore form part of the school's wider safeguarding and child protection processes.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.

- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, children and parents and carers.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is **Matthew Harrold** and can be contacted via mharrold@stgprimary.org or office@stgprimary.org. Staff, parents/carers, and children will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (2024) Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2026) Keeping children safe in education 2026
- DfE (2025) Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE (2024) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Records and Retention Policy

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The local governing committee has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and LA.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance and keeps them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate.
- Through The Black Pear Trust (The Trust), arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing in Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary, or authorising a suitable member of staff to be able to do so.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a child's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.

- Providing the LA with the names and addresses of all children of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been classed as unauthorised.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Working with parents of children with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where children with SEND face barriers within school.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring children do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Recognising that patterns of absence, persistent lateness, repeated medical absences, and prolonged periods of non-attendance may indicate safeguarding concerns and reporting these promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Maintaining professional curiosity where attendance concerns may indicate unmet needs, abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health needs, or wider family difficulties.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with children and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and children regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any child being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.

Children will be responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent and advising when it is expected that their child will return.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

4. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age child not required to attend school

- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age child subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence (including but not limited to):

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason – equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

5. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

The school has high expectations for children's attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and children.

Children will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8:45am**, and children will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, children will be expected to be on the school

site between 8:30-8:44am. Children will have a morning break which will last for 15 minutes, and a lunch break, which will last up to 1 hour – children will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning as per the year group timetable. Registers will be taken as follows:

- The morning register will be taken at **8:45am**. Children on site at this time will be marked as present (/).
- Children attending between **8:46** and **9:14** will receive a late mark (L).
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**.
- Children arriving from **9:15am** onwards, without an authorised explanation will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U).
- The afternoon register will be taken at **1:00pm for Rec/KS1 & KS2.**
- The afternoon register in Nursery will be taken at **12:15pm.**

Children will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or email before **8:40am** on the first day of their child's absence – 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 child 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 by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

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

- Consider whether the absence pattern raises any safeguarding concerns requiring referral to the DSL.
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken. Where attendance concerns present a safeguarding risk, staff will work in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and may make referrals for Family Help, Early Help or Children's Social Care where appropriate.
- 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 child is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the child's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter/email with an explanation for the absences.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a child 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. Where attendance concerns are linked to wider family difficulties or emerging welfare concerns, the school may initiate or contribute to a Family Help assessment and work alongside external agencies to reduce barriers to attendance. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of children who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a child does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school will work jointly with the LA to carry out reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the child's whereabouts. In conducting these enquiries, the school and it's LA will liaise with the Home LA. If, following these enquiries, the child's name is removed from the school's admission register, the Home LA will be expected to investigate whether the child should be classified as a child missing education

If a child's attendance drops below **90 percent**, a letter will be sent to inform parent that they are categorized as Persistently Absent (PA) and therefore their attendance is a cause for concern. The Local Authority Attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the child's parents.

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 children who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation – following the local authority missing in education guidance.

7. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The school uses **Arbor** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.

- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the child having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the child being well enough to attend

- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant children who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Children who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register. The school will continue to monitor the welfare and safeguarding of children receiving remote education where appropriate and ensure attendance concerns are considered within safeguarding arrangements.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

8. AUTHORISING PARENTAL ABSENCE REQUESTS

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the child and the impact on the child's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parent/carers and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a child 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 child's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the child 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 child's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a child's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a child 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.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will have the discretion to grant leave of absence during school hours for children to undertake employment, whether paid or unpaid, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

[Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools] A leave of absence will only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so. That authorised person will not give a child leave of absence to undertake employment (whether paid or unpaid) during school hours except employment to take part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad as per The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 namely:

• Where the LA has issued a licence for the child to take part in a performance as regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.

• Where a licence is not required because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the child has been granted by the LA in which the performance will take place, or by the Secretary of State.

• Where a Justice of the Peace has granted a licence under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 for the child to travel abroad for a performance or another regulated purpose.

While not required to follow Regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school will nonetheless record such absences using the appropriate code, where a child is participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad under a valid licence or exemption.

This code will be recorded as an authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the child's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parent's travelling for occupational purposes

Where a child's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for children from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

9. SEND AND HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES

The school recognises that children with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support children who find attending school difficult.

The school recognises that children with SEND, medical conditions or mental health needs may face additional barriers to attendance and may also face increased safeguarding vulnerabilities. Attendance interventions for these children will be personalised and developed alongside safeguarding, pastoral and SEND teams where appropriate.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a child's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed. All children will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the policy.

If a child is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- inform the LA if a child is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the child's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the child reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the child is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the child to stay in contact with other children during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any children with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the child is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of children with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying children's unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a child to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a child can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby children can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The school will seek medical evidence for recording absences in a minority of cases. Where a child's health need means that they need reasonable adjustments or

support because it is complex or long term, the school will seek medical evidence to better understand the need of the pupil.

10. LEAVE DURING LUNCH TIMES

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a child will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the child will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the child leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No child will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a child is unable to attend because:

- There is a lack of access arrangements.
- Transport normally provided is not available and the school is not within walking distance.
- There is widespread disruption to travel.
- Part of the school premises is closed, and the child cannot be practicably accommodated.

- The whole school site has been closed unexpectedly.
- Public health guidance or law legislates that attendance is respectively not advised or prohibited.
- Any other avoidable cause makes attendance impossible.

The use of the seven 'Y' codes for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes. Code Q will be used in circumstances where there are a lack of access arrangements.

11. TRUANCY

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All children are expected to be in their classes by the agreed morning and afternoon registration times, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any child with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, first day calling procedures would take place.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. MISSING CHILDREN

Children will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a child going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing child will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:

    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the child has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the child will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- A member of SLT will record the incident on My Concern, describing all circumstances leading up to the child going missing.
- If the missing child has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed and the DSL be informed immediately and safeguarding records updated in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- When the child has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the child to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the child has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that children understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

13. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by

    - Sending letters to parents
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams
    - Using fixed penalty notice

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the children whom the intervention is designed to target. The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality through a variety of rewards.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that children with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Attendance data will be routinely considered alongside safeguarding information. Where attendance concerns present alongside indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, serious violence or family difficulties, attendance interventions will form part of a wider safeguarding response led or supported by the DSL.

14. WORKING WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with children and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with children and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services. This may include Family Help services, Children's Social Care, health professionals, mental health services, the Virtual School, SEND services and other safeguarding partners where appropriate.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each child wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child where the child is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance and punctuality and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the child and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the child from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for child absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the child's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the child's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

15. PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10 percent or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50 percent or more of school. Reducing persistent

and severe absence will remain central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

There are various groups of children who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Children who are eligible for FSM
- Children with EAL
- Children with SEND
- Children who have faced bullying and/or discrimination
- Children with a social worker
- Children in kinship care
- Children requiring mental health support
- Children experiencing exploitation
- Children affected by serious violence

The school will use several methods to help support children at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Graduated Approach to SEMH Needs
- Graduated Approach to SEND
- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with children to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Implementing weekly monitoring to review progress and the impact of support
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on children who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these children are facing.

Where a child at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the child in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may constitute neglect and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school recognises that persistent and severe absence may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, serious violence, or wider safeguarding risks. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered alongside all safeguarding information held by the school.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the child attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the child's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

16. PENALTY NOTICES LEGAL INTERVENTION

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

- Whether support is available in this case: It not, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued, whilst also having considerations to the other conditions detailed in this section of the policy.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour, or if further support or other legal intervention is more appropriate.

- Whether issuing a penalty notice in this case is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, such as if the child has a disability.
- 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 notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a child reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued by a headteacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), the LA office, or the police. Any penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices will be charged at £160, if paid within 28 days reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

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.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

17. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. FFT, DfE, Insight and Arbor are used to effectively analyse and monitor data.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. children from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. children with SEND, CLA and children eligible for FSM.
- Children at risk of PA (> 93%)

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **weekly**, **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.
- Safeguarding indicators and vulnerability factors
- Attendance patterns of children with social workers
- Attendance patterns of children in kinship care
- Attendance patterns linked to safeguarding concerns

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of children and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Board of Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the Trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

18. TRAINING OF STAFF

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for children who need it
- The relationship between attendance and safeguarding
- Indicators that attendance concerns may signify neglect, exploitation, serious violence, mental health needs or other safeguarding concerns
- Family Help processes and referral pathways
- Children missing education responsibilities

The Trust will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting children to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

19. DELETIONS OF NAMES FROM THE ADMISSION REGISTER

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A child's name will never be removed for any other reason, and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when children's names are deleted from the admission register. This will be except for children whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a child's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the child will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the child normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the child normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the child's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the child is going to live with and the date the child will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the child's other school and when the child began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the child's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered child and their attendance at any given time. Children's attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

The school recognises that children missing education are at heightened risk of safeguarding harm, including neglect, exploitation, abuse, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. Attendance and admission register concerns will therefore be considered through a safeguarding lens and referred to the DSL where appropriate.

20. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97 percent** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Attendance Officers and Headteachers. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES

St George's Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that children's attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where children's attendance falls below the standard:

1. Attendance data is sent to the SLT and attendance officer detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and children's record their attendance in their planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the child is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any children marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a child's attendance falls to 96 percent, the attendance officer speaks to the child in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a child's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. If a child's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the child's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The child's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the child and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.