



'Growing up together in Newtown'

St. George's C of E Academy Newtown

Attendance Policy September 2023

RATIONALE

- St George's School bases its Attendance Policy on the Guidelines as set out by the Birmingham LA.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the EWS Policy for Extended Leave and Absence During Term Time.
- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with parents, the school shares with them, and the LA, responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils [The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006].
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to the continual improvements of attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive of educational achievement.
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1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

Education Act 1996

Equality Act 2010

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)

Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Children and Young Persons Act 1963

- 1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

Ratified -September 2023 Approved – September 2023

- DfE (2016) 'School attendance'
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance May 2022
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'

1.3. **This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:**

- **School Complaints Procedure**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Safeguarding Children**

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The **Local Academy Board** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of St. George's C of E Academy Newtown
- 2.2. The **Local Academy Board** has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The **Local Academy Board** has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's **School Complaints Procedure**.
- 2.4. The **Head Teacher** is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.7. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.8. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
- **"Absence"** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.

- **An “authorised absence” as:**
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.

- **An “unauthorised absence” as:**
 - 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.
 - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.

- **“Persistent absenteeism” as:**
 - Missing 15 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason. These absences may be authorised OR unauthorised.

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day - the minimum expectation is 98% throughout the year.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. **Parents are required to contact the school office as soon as possible on the first day of their child’s absence. This call should be before 9:15am on EVERY day of the absence.** A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If parents cannot be contacted and concerns are raised, school reserves the right to conduct a home visit to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.
- 6.2. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the family support worker.

- 6.3. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the family support worker will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents. The Head Teacher will lead this meeting as DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

7. Contact information

- 7.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details annually.
- 7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

Children who are absent from education

- 7.3. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the family support worker who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement. The Head Teacher will work alongside the FSW to support this process. Support could be provided via a referral to Early Help, use of the walking bus, offering the family a place at the breakfast club, liaising with local childcare providers.
- 7.4. Additional mental health support alongside Early Help support will be provided for pupils who are Absent from Education or have the potential to become Missing from education in the future.
- 7.5. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the FSW has the power to refer cases to the ELIT (Education Legal Intervention Team) who may issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.
- 7.6. The family support worker has received training on attendance and is also the deputy designated safeguarding lead. The Head teacher will ensure that the FSW is implementing all statutory and legal duties.

8. Lateness

- 8.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 8.2. The school day starts at **8:50am**.
- 8.3. Registers are marked at **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 8.4. **The register closes at 9:10am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 8.5. **After lunch, registers are all marked by 1:30pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 8.6. **The register closes at 1:35pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 8.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

9. Term-time leave

- 9.1. At St. George's C of E Academy Newtown our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 9.2. The Head Teacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 9.3. Parents are encouraged to book all medical appointments outside of school hours.
- 9.4. A Pupil's absence is marked as unauthorised absence for families taking holidays within term-time. Concerns will be raised where a pupil has been absent either:
- a) For a minimum of 5 school days of unauthorised days AND has had 5 school days of other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months: or
 - b) For at least 10 school days of unauthorised absence, where there has been no other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months.
- 9.5. The Head Teacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Head Teacher will be satisfied by the evidence, which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 9.6. The Head Teacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
- 9.7. 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.
- 9.8. **Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:**
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any [unauthorised absence](#)
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10%** for any reason
- 9.9. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines or risk losing their place at school.

10. Truancy

- 10.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 10.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

- 10.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:50am** and **at the end of their staggered lunchtime**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 10.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at **reception using the electronic system** and sign back in again on their return.
- 10.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 10.6. If truancy is suspected, the **Head Teacher** is notified, who will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 10.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
 - In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
 - 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.

11. Missing children

- 11.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day without the permission of the Head Teacher .
- 11.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
 - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **Head Teacher** 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 **Head Teacher**.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - **All classrooms**
 - **All toilets**
 - **Medical Room**
 - **Nurture Room**
 - **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 pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 11.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 11.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 11.5. The **Head Teacher** will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 11.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 11.7. The **Head Teacher** will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 11.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the **Behaviour Policy**.
- 11.9. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

12. Religious observances

- 12.1. The school will follow the advice from BDMAT to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals (a copy of this is attached to this policy).
- 12.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

13. Appointments

- 13.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2. If attendance (authorised or unauthorised absences) drops below 90%, medical appointment evidence will be required. A note and appointment card (with only one written appointment on it) will be sent to the school office for the attention of the AO (Attendance Officer).

13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.

13.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

14. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

14.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

14.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the pupil's home LA.

14.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.

14.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
- The conditions of the licence will be observed.

14.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

14.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

14.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.

14.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

14.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

- 14.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a sixmonth period.
- 14.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 14.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 14.13. The Head Teacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96** percent.
- 14.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Head Teacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 14.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 14.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 14.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 14.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- 14.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 14.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
 - Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
 - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
 - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 14.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 14.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 14.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

15. Young carers

- 15.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 15.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 15.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

16. Monitoring and review

- 16.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year. Attendance figures are reported to the Local Academy Board on a termly basis and children who have attendance below 90% will be highlighted as a concern.
- 16.2. St. George's C of E Academy Newtown **attendance target is 98%**
- 16.3. **Details of our absence levels can be found on our website:** www.stgnewtown.bham.sch.uk
- 16.4. This policy is reviewed every **2 years** by the **Head Teacher and the Local Academy Board**; the next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2024**.
- 16.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

17. Persistent Absence

St. George's will carry out the following additional procedures when absence becomes persistent:

- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

18. Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

At St. George's we will ensure that our actions:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.



- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities



Attendance Monitoring Procedures: Fast-Track

St. George's C of E Academy Newtown has adopted the **Fast-Track** monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard. This process is only applied to children who are of compulsory school age. It is not applied to LAC (Looked After Children).

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the senior leadership team (SLT) by the **Family Support worker** detailing weekly attendance (termly data will be reported the Governing Body via the Head Teacher
2. 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 pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
3. If a pupil's attendance falls below **96%**, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached advice leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90%**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the **attendance officer** contacts the parents to discuss this, inviting them in for a meeting with the Head Teacher . If parents decline this offer, this will also be recorded. At this point, any future medical appointments in school time or any sickness will require medical evidence. This can be in the following formats:
 - Copy of a prescription;
 - Surgery compliment slip with date, pupil's name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist;
 - Medical appointment card with one appointment entered;
 - Letter confirming a hospital appointment;
 - Print screen of medical notes;
 - Doctor's medical certificate;
 - Doctor's letter;
 - Medication prescribed by a Doctor;
 - Letter from another relevant professional.

When a pupil's attendance is of serious concern, telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are NOT acceptable as medical evidence.

5. The Head Teacher initiates Early Help procedure and will speak directly to the pupil to ascertain their perspective on their attendance and how they feel about. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary. Other Early Help methods that may be used are School Nurse, James Brindley School (if appropriate) and the Children Missing in Education team. An informal action plan will be devised – this will then be monitored over the given time scale (determined by the Head Teacher).

6. Following Early Help procedures, if there is another UNAUTHORISED absence, OR if Early Help has been refused by the parent(s) or carers OR if families did not meet the criteria for external Early Help process, then step two in the Fast-Track process will be initiated, with parents being invited to



attend a SARM (School Attendance Review Meeting). The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer will be present.

7. Parents/Carers will receive a letter inviting them to a SARM. At this meeting, a formal action plan will be devised and agreed by the AO, Head Teacher and parents/carers. Parents/Carers will receive a copy of this plan BEFORE they leave the meeting. If parents/carers are not able to attend, they must inform school to enable the meeting to be rearranged. Without prior notification of nonattendance, the meeting will be recorded as 'non-attendance'.
 8. Following the SARM, should a pupil then have further unauthorised absence adding up to at least 10 sessions (NOT days) in total over the previous 12 calendar months, then stage 3 of the FastTrack programme will be initiated.
 9. Stage 3 of the process is the Final Warning Notice. Each person with parental responsibility for the child will receive a letter via the post. This letter will include an attendance printout for the child(ren) question.
 10. Following this, should a pupil have at least 10 further sessions of unauthorised absence within 12 school weeks of the warning notice being issued, then step 4 of the Fast-Track programme will be initiated and the case will be referred to ELIT. ELIT will then determine, based upon evidence provided by the school, whether to:
 - a) Issue a Penalty Notice;
 - b) Issue a Single Justice Notice;
 - c) Issue a summons where parent pleads not guilty;
 - d) Prosecute in court (Section 444 1a)
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