

16:14



'Let all that you do be done in Love' 1  
Corinthians



The

example of Jesus Christ and the Good news that  
He brings inspire St George's to be a place of hope and a  
caring and inclusive community in which we all

Love to learn and Learn to Love.

## St George's CE Primary and Nursery School

### Attendance Policy

<u>Date agreed:</u>	October 2023
<u>Review Date:</u>	October 2025

We believe that good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the educational, emotional and social skills, which will equip them for life.

St George's aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and Education Welfare officers (EWOs) can work in partnership. We will monitor attendance and work quickly to solve any identified problems.

The staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with families and other agencies when this is appropriate. Good attendance is seen as an achievement in its own right and is rewarded.

It is important to remember that only the school can approve absence – within the constraints of the law – not the parents. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

As part of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 school needs to be curious about absence and question repeated or prolonged spells away from school.

#### **Requests for leave of absence**

Following a change in the law from 1st September 2013 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will not authorise any holidays in term time. Other leave of absence requests will be considered on an individual basis and only in exceptional circumstances.

Any absences taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract a penalty notice.

Parents and carers must discuss any wishes to take children out of school with the Headteacher, **BEFORE** flights are booked. This will enable some discussion about the length of time away and options to limit this. Any requests should always be made in writing to the Headteacher.

Funerals will be unauthorised, but travelling days on either side, if going overseas, will not be added into sessions missed, which could add up to a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notices**

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in a 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if a child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration at 9.30am, parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. The penalty notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution. In law, an offence is committed if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school.

Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once
- They go on holiday in term time without school's permission
- The child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued for such an offence.

## **Guidelines**

### **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Please ensure your child attends regularly.

Please ensure that your child arrives in time for registration at 08:40am and help your child understand the importance of being on time.

Arriving after close of registration at 9.30am will result in an unauthorised absence mark which can result in a Penalty Notice. (See above.) If late, please accompany your child to the office and sign them in.

Please contact the office by 9 am if your child is unable to attend school due to illness.

Each day that your child is off, the office would appreciate a telephone call to inform them of this absence.

If your child is frequently absent and attendance is under 90% school may ask for this absence to be supported with medical evidence such as a prescription or message from the GP on your phone or appointment card. Without this evidence, the absence will not be authorised.

Minor ailments such as colds, sore throats, headaches and tummy aches can be managed in school if given paracetamol at home first. Sometimes tummy aches and headaches are a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay at home. School will work with you to find out the reason for this and support your child to come into school.

Please arrange family holidays outside of term times.

School wants to work with you to encourage good attendance by encouraging your attendance at meetings and supporting targets to help your child.

Make contingency plans amongst family and friends to ensure your child stays in school and is looked after, if you need to travel overseas to visit a relative who is ill.

**SCHOOL WILL:**

Promote good attendance and inform parents half termly of their child's attendance.

Help every child to reach their maximum potential unhindered by unnecessary breaks in school life.

Demonstrate that the school values good attendance by giving certificates for children who reach the 96% target and above each half term.

Celebrate 100% attendance each year with a certificate and prize.

Monitor attendance weekly and will visit, send letters and arrange meetings to work with parents to improve attendance if it drops below 90%. This will be managed through an Attendance Plan. This plan uses the Signs of Safety model of focusing on strengths, understanding problems and finding ways to overcome them. These plans will be reviewed after three to four weeks. The meetings will still go ahead if a parent chooses not to attend.

Offers of an Early Help Assessment can be made to support families where extra support is needed.

School will make a phone call by 10am each day if a child is not in school and school has not had a message from a parent. Pastoral staff will make a home visit if no contact has been made.

School will inform the Local Authority about children who miss up to 15 days of school due to a medical condition and write an Individual Health Care Plan to support their needs.

School works with the Education Welfare Service to promote good attendance.

We will contact you and send your child home if they are unwell.

**THE OFFICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

Recording attendance codes correctly for both am and pm sessions.

Recording information from letters/telephone calls from parents.

Producing Monthly official registers.

Producing lateness/absence letters when necessary. Producing reports as required.

Recording information from Application for Leave of Absence letters and notifying parents whether leave will be authorised or unauthorised.

**CATEGORISING ABSENCE:**

Routine GP, dental and optician appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible and may not be authorised.

Emergency dental or doctor's appointments will be authorised with medical evidence eg prescriptions or the GP appointment on a phone or note. If a medical appointment is unavoidable, your child should attend school before and after the appointment.

If your child has a recurring medical problem, please make sure school is aware of this. Showing medical cards or letters stating appointments will ensure your child's absence is marked as authorised.

Religious observance will be authorised.

Other cultural reasons for absence will be considered sympathetically.

Sitting external examinations e.g. music exams will be authorised.

Absence off-site for special tuition may be authorised.

Fixed period or permanent exclusions will be authorised.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request this information from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.