



**Southwark Diocesan
Board of Education
Multi-Academy Trust**
Developing Church of England Education



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY ST GEORGE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, LEWISHAM 23/24

*‘Creating inspiring learning communities where all can grow and flourish,
rooted in God’s love, bearing fruit abundantly.*

Our School Vision

Be brave. Be great. Be you.

Our School Culture Statement:

We are fun. We are together.

Aim

This policy aims to meet and exceed our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Making the promotion of good attendance and punctuality everyone’s responsibility within the school community.
- Demonstrating that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Developing and maintaining effective communication between home and school.
- Making Parents aware of their legal responsibilities

Promoting good attendance

At **St George’s**, we celebrate good attendance by:

- Encouraging children to think about healthy routines that promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Weekly newsletter presenting the best class attendance, the school’s average attendance for that week and the year, alongside our target attendance for the academic year. .
- Praising and encouraging good attendance at school.
- Awarding a joint Certificate of Achievement to parent/carer and child for 100% attendance each half term.
- Sending letters to families who have improved attendance.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

We expect all children to:

Attend school regularly.

Attend school on time.

Attend School ready to learn.

We expect parents to:

Fulfil their legal obligation to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

We expect staff to:

Model good attendance behaviour.

Follow this policy and support children and families do so too.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and ready to learn at school each day.
- informing the school of the reasons on the first day of any absence and any subsequent days.
- booking medical and dental appointments out of school hours (where possible)
- providing medical evidence when required to support reasons for absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- collecting their children on time
- in exceptional circumstances completing the emergency leave request form.
- arranging family holidays during the school holidays and not during term time.
- following this policy.

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.

It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Responding to all term time leave requests.
- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Approving welfare home visits.
- Supporting staff with any attendance issues that may arise with individual pupils.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary.

Inclusion leader/Deputy Headteacher (in liaison with the EWO)

- Monitors attendance and punctuality data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Contacts parents regarding their child's attendance.
- Organises meetings with parents and carers.

- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher, SC (Social Care), EWO (Education Welfare Officer) School Police Officer and Early Help Service.
- Sets targets and completes Parenting Contracts.
- Works with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence.
- Signposts parents to outside supportive organisations
- Completes referrals to Early Help, EWO, Local Authority (LA), MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), School Nurse.
- Completes welfare check following the first day of absence if a parent has not been in contact with the school.

Class teachers

Welcome children to school at the beginning of each day and back to school when they have been absent.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- taking the am and pm register using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.
- Ensuring messages from parents, are recorded, and sent to the school office.

School office staff

- Receive and document daily absence data.
- Make calls, send text messages, letters, and emails to parents/carers.
- Provides attendance data to HT, DHT,
- Compiles attendance data reports for HT, DHT Governing Body and EWO.
- Are the first point of contact for all parents to provide reasons for absence.

Schools Strategy to reduce PA and severe absence.

A child will become a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year no matter what the reason. Absence at this level will affect a child's educational prospects and we need Parents and Carers support in promoting positive attendance. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parent/carer will be informed immediately of the school's concern via letter or email.

School attendance data is monitored daily by the School Office. SLT use attendance data to identify trends and target resources to support pupil groups who are flagged. When reviewing attendance data SLT will compare year on year attendance, students who are pupil premium, SEN students and other vulnerable groups identified.

If attendance concerns persist and/ or attendance drops below an average of 95% and towards a level of persistent absence (this does not apply to the first half term as attendance is affected by the number of days a student attends) the School will offer a school meeting to set targets for improvement, offer support in house intervention offered, look at external support where necessary and consider any further support that may be needed.

At this stage the case will also meet the threshold for referral onto our Education Welfare Service. Once a referral is completed our Education Welfare Officer will assist in formalising support by; completing an initial assessment home visit, offering individualised Attendance Improvement plans, Parenting Contracts and offer support where possible with any on-going issues. The EWS continually assess and liaise with families and the School. If attendance continues to deteriorate or improvement plans are not adhered to then the case will be considered for a Penalty Notice or referral to the LA, for legal assessment and planning.

Referral to external agencies

We will always try to work with parents where there are concerns about a child's school attendance and punctuality. We believe support and preventative work is key to improving attendance.

Staff working closely with parents/carers are aware of family and environmental factors which may be impinging on attendance and work with a network of external agencies – e.g. Early Help, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), School Nurse, MASH, Children's Social Care, etc.

Once a child's attendance has fallen below average and towards a level of persistent absence, we work closely with families to identify the reasons behind the absence and offer in house support to address a child's needs. If a child's attendance is deteriorating and inhouse support offered is not bringing about necessary change, we will discuss with and signpost families to external support agencies.

At all times, staff are respectful, engaging and solution-focused in their attempts to work with parents/carers. They work with parents/carers to enable and empower them to make positive changes for their child. However, this does not prevent any member of school staff from promoting strongly that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child's attendance and punctuality.

Where children are at risk of becoming PA's, have a history of poor attendance or have become severely absent, the school seeks the advice. As an additional form of support referrals will be completed to our Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls to 90% or below. Our EWO completes home visits, arranges attendance lead Team Around the Family Meetings (TAF), advises the School where external referrals are needed, completes safeguarding referrals, offers independent education advice to parents, completes Attendance Improvement Plans, Parenting Contracts and works with the LA where Statutory Action is considered.

Day to day processes for managing attendance.

Registers

At St George's, we use DFE (Department for Education) codes to complete the registers. Attendance is marked with either an authorised or unauthorised code. It is at the Headteachers discretion as to whether attendance is authorised or not.

The school day starts at **8:45am** and the school day ends at 3:20pm.

Teachers are expected to complete their registers by **8:55am** using the Arbor system. Registers close at **9:45 am** for the morning session and children are marked as unauthorised late from this point and **2:00pm** for

the afternoon session. Any child who arrives after this time is marked as being unauthorised late, unless information has been received prior to arrival or has been authorised, i.e. If the child has a medical appointment.

Fire registers are printed via our data management systems as required.

Registers are checked weekly for errors which are corrected, and any N codes are then investigated by the Attendance Officer via letter.

Lateness and punctuality

Children who arrive late to school after **8:55am** enter via the school reception area. The Office staff then ensures the child is registered and the reason for lateness is recorded in the late record. This is inspected fortnightly by the Office staff and discussed with the EWO. The reason for lateness and time of arrival is recorded on Arbor.

Where a child is persistently late, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent /carer to arrange a meeting to establish the reasons for the lateness and set a plan for improvement.

Unexpected absence

If a child is unable to attend school on any given day due to illness or an emergency, parents / carers are required to inform the office by 9:00am of the reasons for absence by calling **0208 699 5127**.

It is at the Headteacher's discretion to authorise absence, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the reported absence then an authorised code will be applied to the register however, once a child's attendance falls below 90% an unauthorised code may be applied.

The school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate document.

Planned absence.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence if the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Following up on unexplained absence

On the first day of absence, if the school have not received notification of a child's reason for absence, the Receptionist/ Attendance Officer will call home by 10am to try and obtain reasons for the absence. If this contact is successful, the reason for absence will be noted on Arbor and a suitable code entered in the register.

If no contact is made by the parent following a phone call, then a text message will be attempted. If parents / carers have not been in contact by **10:00am** then we will start to call all the emergency contact numbers on a child's file to gain an explanation for the absence.

If it has not been possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a child, then a Welfare Check will be considered and completed by the third consecutive day of absence. If we are unable to get a response once a welfare check has been completed by school staff the child will be viewed as missing and the Police and our Education Welfare Service will be notified for further action.

Persistent Absence

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate 90% or below, the pupil will be classified as a Persistent Absentee (PA).

Pupils are tracked and monitored carefully, and we combine academic monitoring where absence affects attainment using our three-tier framework noted below:

Stage 1: The School monitors attendance on a regular basis and identifies any pupil(s) whose attendance causes concern. The school will formally write to advise parents/carers as part of our commitment to improving the attainment of pupils.

Stage 2: If concerns persist and attendance falls below 95%, the school will contact the parent / carer and offer a school meeting to discuss ways to improve attendance. There will be opportunities for the parent/carers to discuss the reasons for the absence and supportive measures will be offered by the school with the aim of improving attendance. At this stage, the parent will be advised that if future absence is unauthorised then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist and attendance reaches 90% the school will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues. **The Education Welfare Officer will complete a Parenting Contract or Attendance Improvement Plan with families and advise parents /carers of their legal responsibility regarding regular school attendance. If attendance continues to deteriorate or this plan is not adhered to, then the case will be considered for referral to the LA, for legal assessment and planning.**

Term Time Leave and Exceptional Circumstances

In line with DFE guidance, at St George's the Headteacher will **not** authorise term time leave for family holidays or for other reasons, unless there is an exceptional circumstance.

Application for any term-time leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made two weeks in advance (where possible) by the parent with whom the child normally resides, on the form headed 'Exceptional Circumstance Pupil Term Time Leave Request.' These may be obtained from the School Office. Each application must be supported with documented evidence. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

If a request for term time leave is not authorised, the school will consider on a case-by-case basis whether it meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice. A Penalty Notice warning letter would then be issued, and evidence collated and sent the Local Authority who may issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

Children Missing Education (CME)

A child of compulsory school age who is either not registered at a school or not receiving a suitable education in place of a school setting, is deemed as a Child Missing Education (CME).

A CME may be at a significant risk of not meeting their academic potential and underachieving, so all reported cases are referred to the LA for full investigation.

Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they wish, instead of sending them to school full-time.

Educating children at home, works well when it is a positive choice and carried out with a proper regard for the needs of the child.

If you wish to opt for this method of education, please inform the school in writing. It is important that you get all the necessary support, as under this arrangement you will assume all financial responsibility for your child's education and examinations.

We recommend contact is made with the Local Authority Home Education Advisor which can be found on Lewisham's website.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures.

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives appropriate full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, or special needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence must be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE)

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 Parents/Carers of a child of compulsory school age, who fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, may be found guilty of an offence, and can be prosecuted by the local authority. The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the section 444(1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the section 444(1A) the level 4 fine is, up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence parents to imprisonment for up to three months.

The Education Regulations 2007 (and its related amendments) introduced the use of Penalty notices where fines of £60/£120 can be imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Penalty notices can only be issued by a Headteacher, or someone authorised by them (a Deputy or Assistant Head), a Local Authority Officer or the Police. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and its related amendments) stipulates that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should thus determine the number of authorised school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Our School's Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Department for Education 2020
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – Department for Education
- The Prevent Duty – Department for Education June 2015



EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

PUPIL TERM TIME LEAVE REQUEST

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class

I request permission for the above-named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request (please provide as much detail as possible and any supporting evidence):

.....
.....

Dates of Absence From To No of school days

I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- if travelling with in the UK or abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, I / we could then be required to attend Court; this could result in a fine of up to £2500 per parent per child and a criminal record.
- if the leave request is not authorised by the school and it is still taken during term-time, this could result in a penalty notice and subsequent sanctions as detailed in the sentence above.
- in exceptional circumstances penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.

Parent/Carer Name

Address.....

Signature..... Date.....

Parent/Carer Name

Address.....

..... Signature.....

Date.....

To be completed by Headteacher

Request agreed / denied.

Signed Head Teacher Dated