

# Attendance Policy



**Approved by:**

**Date:** June 2020

**Last reviewed on:** January 2022

**Next review due by:** January 2023

## **Principles:**

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, anti bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

## **School Responsibilities:**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through our use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

## **Parents or Carers Responsibilities:**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure all children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside of the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Where ever possible do not book holidays in term time
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

## **The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 Department of Education). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.
- For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A\* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of



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pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.

- The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.

### **Attendance Welfare Worker:**

- Our Education Welfare Worker visits the school to monitor attendance and provide welfare support. Where concerns are identified regarding attendance/punctuality/welfare then a home visit might be made. Individual plans may be drawn up between the school/authority and the parent/carer and pupil to support improvements. The Education Welfare Worker organises attendance clinics on a group and 1:1 basis to support improvements within families where attendance is unsatisfactory, including in all cases where it is below 90%

### **Admissions Register:**

- School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents. No less than 2 sets of contact details must be provided and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **Elective Home Education:**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Staffordshire CC via Entrust at [enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **Attendance data and targets:**

The Attendance targets for the school are set annually by the Directors based on cohorts and trends. The target for 2019/20 is 96.5%



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This data included for two terms is available annually for the previous year in October whilst full year data is not available until March of the next year. This two terms data appears in school ASP and ISDR reports. Full year data is important and provides the full picture of attendance patterns for the school

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Unauthorised holidays
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

*The Local Authority has the statutory powers under the Education Act 1996 to ensure children attend school and if they cannot successfully engage with the family to achieve this, they may use statutory powers to enforce parent's/carers responsibility regarding their child's school attendance. The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 amended section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to allow parents to be issued with a penalty where they failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age (5-16) and school registered regular attendance. A penalty notice is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If, after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the Local Authority will prosecute the parents under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work with staff to resolve any problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker, Local Support Team or receive internal support from the school. If ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these the school can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.*

### School Specific Procedures related to:

- **Notifying school that a child is absent and for what reason**

It is the duty of our parent/carers to inform school by 9.15 a.m. on the first day of absence of their child (ren) If this is not done we will initiate our first day contact systems to make every attempt to contact the parent/carer or other family members to ensure both the child who is absent and their parent/carer is safe.

- **Registration times and procedures related to lateness**

Our school doors open at 8.45 and we promote good timekeeping. Registration begins at 8.55 and any child who is not present will be given a late mark (L), registers close at 9.30 a.m. after which a child will be not gain a mark for the morning. However we do encourage parents to bring their child into school as soon as is possible so that a mark can be given for the afternoon session.

- **Home school agreements**



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Our school has a home school agreement which every parent and child is asked to sign and acknowledge. Central to our policy is that children arrive on time and ready to learn. We believe this will ensure your child thrives and receives the best start to daily learning.

- **Procedures for reporting to Local Advisory Board Members regarding school attendance data, policy and procedures**

The Local Advisory Board have a responsibility to review attendance figures on a termly basis. All group and school attendance figures are also presented via the Headteacher's Report to Local Advisory Board and to Directors .

- **Roles and responsibilities within school of staff at all levels including accountabilities and performance management.**

All staff recognise the importance of good attendance and celebrate this regularly. Staff report any absence immediately and first day contact will be made. If staff become aware of any pattern of absence, this too is reported to the Head teacher who will investigate and follow up all concerns made. Where attendance may be having a negative impact on pupil outcomes this will be discussed during our 3 annual pupil progress meetings.

- **Involving other agencies** – the Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

- **Responsibilities and arrangements for information sharing, safeguarding and complaints procedures if an alternative external agency is used by the school to support pupil attendance**

Information regarding pupils whose attendance or lateness is concerning may be shared confidentially with LST and EWW. This will be done to ensure pupils and their families are supported both quickly and effectively.

A complaint regarding the conduct of any member of staff must be reported to the Head teacher who will follow the school's complaint policy to address the issues raised

### Medical or dental appointments

- The school promotes the health and well-being of all our pupils and recognises the importance of some medical and dental appointments. We would ask that as much as is possible these appointments take place out of school hours. If this is not possible, we request appointments are made as close to the beginning or end of the day and that we are informed via the appointment card of the arrangements. In such cases a M will be awarded on the school register. However, we would encourage parents to register their child before attending a medical, dental or speech and language appointment.

### Definition of persistent absence:

From September 2015 this definition changed to include pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions. If a pupil's attendance is below 90% the school will work with the family on an individual basis to improve this and attendance by meeting with them regularly and the impact of this work will be monitored on a weekly basis until it has improved

### Leave of Absence during Term Time

The school does not promote leave of absence in term time and works hard to ensure INSET days are set to help extend holidays and reduce costs wherever possible. However if a parent feels leave of absence has a justifiable circumstance they are asked to submit a leave of absence form , which can be found at <https://www.stgilesstgeorgesacademy.co.uk> absence at least 4 weeks before the date of the leave commences. The Headteacher can grant leave of absence for extenuating circumstances only.

Leave of absence in term time is discouraged. Parents are not automatically allowed to take their child out of school on holiday. Head teachers are only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in



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advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

### Absence from school during term time

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The Head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the Head teacher to the local authority.

### Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

If a pupil achieves 10 unauthorised late marks within a 12-week period a penalty notice warning will be issued, late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. Parents are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure their child attends school on time. However, if a child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as we may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

### Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you will receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

### What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If, after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the Local Authority will prosecute the parents under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work with staff to resolve any problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/She will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### To summarise:

**Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:**

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the Head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the Head teacher.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions (days) of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.
- **Other conditions.**
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.



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### Children Missing in Education

- This policy works in conjunction with our Children Missing in Education Policy (CMiE) which follows the DfE Guidelines issued in September 2016. Staff are clear as to this policy and if any concerns are raised will refer enquiries to the Staffordshire Child Missing in Education Department for further investigation.

### Monitoring and analysis of attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils including vulnerable groups.

The Head teacher monitors on a weekly basis the attendance of all groups of pupils within the school, including any pupil at risk of being deemed a persistent absentee as their attendance falls close to 95%, those who have a disability or special educational needs, those eligible for pupil premium funding.

#### We celebrate attendance by:

- Awarding a best class award on a weekly basis, sharing this news via our school newsletter and website.
- We reward individual children on a termly basis who achieve 100% and also children who achieve 100% for the whole year are rewarded with a treat at the end of the year.
- Termly letters are sent directly to parents to highlight their children's attendance.

#### Families of children whose attendance or punctuality concerns us will be supported via:

- Attendance clinics
- Home visits
- Regular face to face meetings, including meetings with the school nurse, parent support workers or members of our local support team.
- Support from the school with transport arrangements

#### Roles of key staff in school –

First day contact and leave of absence are managed by Mrs E Alcock Applications will be discussed by the Headteacher, after which a decision will be made with regards to which applications are deemed to have extenuating circumstances and therefore will be authorised.

#### Legal Framework:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010



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### Appendices:

- Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices
- Department for Education Guidance –Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers
- Example proformas such as school 'Leave of Absence' request or referral form for support from an external agency
- Example letters such as colour coded letters to parents related to levels of attendance





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### Appendix 1

96.5% - 100%

#### WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

- Rewards
- Class reward
- Annual awards ceremony
- Team points each week

90 - 96.4%

#### BE CAREFUL

If you are in the yellow group, you could be missing more than 2 weeks of learning

- Attendance interviews
- Letters sent home
- Interviews with parents
- Attendance workshops

Below 90%

#### PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year.

- Further letters and meetings
- Home visits
- Education Welfare for possible prosecution/fines