



Attendance and Absence Policy

Statement:

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Keeping Children Safe in Education, July 2015

St. George's School Edgbaston believes in the fundamental right of all children to fully access all educational opportunities. Pupils need to attend school and be punctual for the maximum time that they are able, in order to make educational progress; not only academic, but also social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural progress.

Attendance Policy:

By law, Education Act 1996 Section 444, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn, or has a day of religious observance.

'Failure to ensure that your child attend school on a regular basis is considered to be neglect.'

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August; if they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December.

Our policy applies to all children registered in Lower School, and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education, in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Trustees at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

The Government expects

- **Schools and Local Authorities** to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- **Schools and Local Authorities** to Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- **Schools and Local Authorities** to Act early to address patterns of absences
- **Parents** to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- **All pupils** to be punctual to their lessons.

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Definitions:

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones or emails the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the Education Welfare service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time giving a minimum of two weeks notice, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Arrival and Registration:

All children should have arrived at school by 8.40am each day, although children can enter Morning Care from 8.00am to make a calm start to the day.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

Morning registration ends at 8.55am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked as **late**. After 9.15am this may become an **Unauthorised Absence**. The afternoon registration is taken after lunch at 1.30pm.

Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.50am and by 1.35pm.

Lateness

Registration is closed at 8.55am, and any pupil who comes into school after this time will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am will initially marked Attendance code U and may be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of a fire or any other emergency as an appendix to class registers. Registers are checked regularly by the Head Teacher to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers, and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

Absences/Illness and medical appointments:

Every effort should be made to arrange medical or other appointments, such as music exams or routine dental check-ups, outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. Where possible a child's absence should be supported by a form of evidence. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

If you have not made contact with the school by 9.30am, the school will contact you to request an explanation of absence.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process.

Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware of why the child is absent, and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. The answer machine (0121 454 0099) is checked daily for absence messages alternatively parents may also e-mail the office with this information DoddA@sgse.co.uk or MortiboysT@sgse.co.uk

Where there is a satisfactory explanation, office staff will change the absence to authorised absence with a note to this effect on the register.

If unable to contact parents for a satisfactory explanation, this absence will only be changed to authorised absence once a tutor has been able to follow it up with parents/guardians.

Where no explanation is forthcoming and it is clear that a pupil has truanted or has been allowed to miss school for holidays etc without the Head's permission the register will be changed by Julia to show unauthorised absence.

Illness

No child should attend school until 48 hours after they have suffered sickness and/or diarrhoea.

Every effort should be made to arrange dental/ medical appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, children should be returned to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Parent/carers are required to sign their child(ren) in and out of school at the school office in the Medical/Dental Appointments folder.

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Arrangements for absence such as family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that the school is informed of the circumstances by the parent so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Holidays during term time:

Term times are for education. This is our priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. We will rightly prioritise attendance, and absences for holidays/vacations will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are where requests are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Traffic Light System:

The School has introduced a termly 'Traffic Light' system as a way to 'grade' attendance at school. At the end of each term, we will be sending out attendance certificates/reports on coloured paper to inform you of your child's attendance level and to highlight areas of concern.

The minimum attendance level that is expected for all primary aged children nationally is 95%. Good attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible to develop academically and socially.

When children are absent from school they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled by this.

At the end of each term:

- If you receive a **GOLD** certificate, then this means that your child has achieved **100%** attendance, which is above Government expectations and will help us reach our target as a school. Thank you and well done!
- If you receive a **GREEN** certificate, then this means that your child has attendance which is on or above the minimum level recommended by the Government, **95%**.
- If you receive a **YELLOW** report, this means that, whilst your child's attendance is not yet 'concerning', they have attendance of **below 95%, but above 85%** and have therefore had an above average amount of time off school so far this term. It may be that these absences have been due to illness or an authorised holiday, but we feel you should be aware that your child's attendance is below the minimum level recommended and does need to improve.
- If your child receives a **RED** report, this means that they have had significant periods of time off school this year (**below 85%**) and are at risk of underachieving as a result. We would ask for your support in ensuring that, where possible, attendance improves over the coming weeks. Your child's attendance is now being monitored on a regular basis and we will invite you into school to discuss this further.

Celebrating good attendance:

We believe very much in celebrating children's successes in all that they do and we consider attendance to be part of this.

As well as the termly Gold Certificates, children who have attendance of 100% for the academic year will be invited to take part in a planned treat to celebrate their success.

Poor attendance: How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	45 lessons
90%	17 days	3.5 weeks	85 lessons
80%	35 days	7 weeks	175 lessons
70%	52 days	10.5 weeks	260 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, such as your child's reluctance to come to school, then please contact your child's teacher or a member of staff.

If we have any concerns, then the school will contact you to discuss your child's attendance and to see if there are ways in which we can help you.

The school will actively monitor the attendance of children whose attendance is a cause for concern.

If, following a red report, your child's attendance does not improve, we will contact you again in order to discuss the situation further and will require you to attend a meeting in school. It may also be necessary to ask the Local Authority Attendance Officer for assistance in this matter.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed

between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State)9 .KCSIE July 2015

We are asking for the support of all parents in maintaining good attendance levels, as we believe that this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

Reviewed – September 2015

Next Review – November 2016