



Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At St George's we believe that each child has a fundamental right to be educated. We believe that regular attendance at school plays an important part in helping each pupil to develop her/his potential. To these ends, we will do all we can to ensure that all pupils attend to their fullest and that any problems which may obstruct this are recognised and acted upon as soon as possible.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day and on time, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so and the whole school attendance target has been set by the Governing Body at 97%. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend school, and put in place the appropriate procedures.

Our school will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. St George's believes that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is to develop positive attitudes towards school and learning. We are committed in making our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. All children who have 100% attendance in any term will receive a certificate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Be prepared for the school day

Parents/Carers are expected to

- Ensure that their child attends school
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually
- Ensure that their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence
- To inform a member of staff of any problems their child is experiencing which may impinge on their child's ability to attend school regularly.

Class Teachers are expected to:

- Promote and encourage good school attendance and punctuality
- Monitor pupils attendance
- Maintain an accurate register and contact home with concerns about attendance and punctuality.
- If there are any concerns regarding a pupil's absence, then the pupil should be referred to the headteacher

The **Headteacher** will:

- Authorise absence / decline authorisation
- Make decisions on acceptability of reasons for absence
- Encourage parents/carers to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement
- Establish the reasons for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc.

- Hold meetings with parents to discuss areas of concern and where other support might be appropriate.
- Initiate a CAF referral as deemed necessary.

The **Administrative staff** will:

- Check daily register completion.
- Record late arrivals and early departures.
- Make contact with home where no explanation of an absence has been received.
- Prepare attendance reports for the Head teacher and Early Help, to use internally or to support information for other reports and meetings.

The Aim of the School is to:

- Facilitate pupils regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all the pupils.
- Clearly inform parents and carers of their roles to play in maintaining good attendance and time keeping.
- Follow closely the advice from the LA.
- Make everyone aware of the requirements from the DfE and work in co-operation with the Early Help Service.

Education Act 1996

The legal requirement under the Education Act 1996 is that every child attends school regularly and on time. The Education Authority can take legal action against parents and carers. In cases of proven guilt, the result could be a fine of up to £2,500 per parent for each child and /or 3 months imprisonment. Parents who are prosecuted under this Section of the law commit a criminal offence and therefore would have a criminal record.

St George's Cathedral Catholic Primary School advises parents that the London Borough of Southwark will be issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences. Please read the protocol below for further information:

PENALTY NOTICE PROTOCOL (APRIL 2014)

Legal Basis

1.1 Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, which created a new section 444A Education Act 1996, empowers designated LA officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 came into force on 1 September 2007. A PN can also be issued in relation to the offence of an excluded pupil being in a public place during school hours during the first 5 days of an exclusion. This protocol describes the circumstances and procedures under which Notices will be issued by the London Borough of Southwark.

1.2 A Penalty Notice imposes a financial penalty of up to £120 which, if paid, discharges liability for conviction for the offence to which the penalty relates (s444 (1) Education Act).

1.3.1 The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Equality Act 2010. Each LA must draw up and consult on a code of conduct under which the issue of Penalty Notices will operate.

1.3.2 The LA has the prime responsibility for developing the Protocol within which all partners identified through the legislation will operate. Penalty Notices issued without, or outside the terms of a Local Code of Conduct are unlawful.

Parents are hereby given notice that if their child fails to attend school regularly, they may be liable for a Penalty Notice.

- If the parent chooses to take the child out of school in term time without authorisation from the Headteacher then in the first instance a fixed penalty notice will be issued. If this occurs for a second time in the child's schooling at St. George's then the case will be referred for further action, including the possibility of court proceedings.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, says:

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, her parent is guilty of an offence".

If the reasons given for your child's irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £60 fine
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.**
- **The Government expects:**
- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are
 - entitled; and,
 - act early to address patterns of absence.
 - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
 - Ensure all pupils arrive punctually to their lessons.

Request for Leave of Absence

- Parents must fill in the school's request for leave of absence form, which can be obtained from the main office.
- There is no longer an automatic right for parents to request up to 10 days for holidays for their children.
- The Government is strongly urging that parents are to avoid taking family holidays during term time.
- **LEAVE FOR FAMILY HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED BY THE HEADTEACHER IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- Exceptional circumstance will be determined by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.
- Children are entitled to leave of absence for religious observance in the family faith.

The following request for leave will automatically be unauthorised:

- Holidays in term time (unless circumstances are exceptional – this will be rare)
- Leave of absence requested at the start of an academic year – being absent for the first two weeks of an academic year can be detrimental to a child settling into their new class, meeting their teacher and making relationships.
- Leave of absence leading up to Y6 SATs – this is a time where children are consolidating their learning in preparation for the end of key stage national tests

The registration system

The School uses manual paper registers and a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

- Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink.
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The attendance registers are taken at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it into the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

School aged children residing in Southwark have the right to receive an appropriate education and the vast majority of children are doing so. However, there are a number of ways a child fails to access the school system and hence becomes missing from education. It is vital that all schools within Southwark are proactive in ensuring that as far as possible, children and young people are not lost to education and that when families inform schools of relocation, all relevant information in regard to destination, forwarding addresses, new schools etc is sought. It is not acceptable to de-register a child with only minimal information on where the family are moving to.

Therefore, the Children Missing Education team will;

- co-ordinate, through multi-agency work, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing or at risk of missing education
- manage the co-ordination of the referral process
- work in partnership with key stakeholders in Southwark to develop the already existing inter agency network so that all members are aware of the referral process for pupils who are missing or at risk of missing education
- manage a central database of all children missing or at risk of missing education in the borough and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and placements
- identify and allocate a lead professional in relation to Children Missing Education
- follow robust tracking and monitoring systems to confirm residency of children moving out of the borough
- raise awareness of the service and provide guidance/advice to all schools and lead professionals in the borough regarding children missing education