

Model policy for LA Maintained schools

St George's Beneficial CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Governors	Date: 29 th September 2022
Review frequency:	Statutory requirement: Yes
Last reviewed:	Next review due:

1. Rationale

At St George's Beneficial CE Primary School we recognise that for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including educational attainment and progress, wellbeing and wider life chances, good attendance at school is essential. Children who attend school regularly have better relationships and more consistent learning, thus they achieve more highly, making better progress and can develop higher self-confidence and esteem. The link between good attendance, standards of behaviour and attainment is clear.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special education need they may have. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly and on time.

Our school has a strong relationship with families, and we are committed to working in partnership to support parents and children who may experience any barriers to school attendance.

Therefore, ensuring good attendance and improving attendance is everyone's business.

St George's Beneficial CE Primary School fully supports Portsmouth City Council and the Portsmouth Education Partnership with the 'Miss School Miss Out' campaign.

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to regular good school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos, and relational practice, that values education and the life chances it enables, including:

- ☐ Promoting the benefits that school attendance and education brings
- ☐ Working collaboratively to maximise school attendance
- ☐ Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ☐ Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ☐ Acting early to address patterns of absence
- ☐ Listening to and understanding any barriers that families may face
- ☐ Building strong relationships with families to ensure children and young people have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and carers

- ☐ Make sure their child attends school every day/timetabled session and on time
- ☐ Inform the school of any absence before 9:15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- ☐ Provide the school with more than 1 contact number for their child
- ☐ Ensure that, where possible, medical or other non-urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- ☐ Support the school with their child aiming for 100% attendance every school year
- ☐ Discuss with the classteacher, learning mentor or office staff any potential planned absences to see if these can be avoided wherever possible

Classteachers

- ☐ Classteachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on our MIS, Arbour.
- ☐ Meet and greet children
- ☐ Promote and reward good/improved attendance with pupils at all opportunities
- ☐ Liaise with the Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality
- ☐ Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence with the Attendance Officer/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ☐ Support pupils after any absence to engage with their learning when they are back in school

School Office staff

- ☐ Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- ☐ Transfer calls from parents to the relevant member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- ☐ Ensure that pupils are accurately signed in/out during the school day

The attendance officer

- ☐ Check that registers match the absence information
- ☐ Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly
- ☐ Follow-up any non-attendance that is not accounted for
- ☐ Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- ☐ Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- ☐ Work with local authority staff and the Portsmouth Education Partnership to tackle and improve persistent absence
- ☐ Advise the headteacher when to consider referral for fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance – at St George's this is the headteacher

- ☐ Take the lead for attendance across the school
- ☐ Offer a clear vision to drive attendance improvement

- ☐ Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- ☐ Have an oversight of data analysis
- ☐ Report attendance information to Governors
- ☐ Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- ☐ Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- ☐ Deliver targeted intervention and support to children and families

The headteacher

- ☐ Ensure implementation of this policy at the school
- ☐ Monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors regularly
- ☐ Support school staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- ☐ Make referrals for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- ☐ Support the work of the Portsmouth Education partnership Behaviour and Attendance Group

The Governing Board

- ☐ Set high expectations for all leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- ☐ Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- ☐ Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- ☐ Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- ☐ Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and groups of pupils
- ☐ Have oversight of staff training on attendance to ensure that it is regular and rigorous
- ☐ Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4. Attendance expectations and procedures

4.1 The attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present / Attending an approved off-site educational activity / Absent / Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- ☐ Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day
- ☐ The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:00am in class. Children who are late must go via the school office. Lates are classed as unauthorised if after 9:30 am
- ☐ The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session and will be kept open 5 minutes (afternoon sessions are staggered)
- ☐ The school day finishes at 3:15 pm

The attendance register is a legal document and may be used in evidence in cases of prosecution for non-attendance.

4.2 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time planned absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Go to section 5 to find out examples of which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Any leave of absence must be requested on the LOA form, a minimum of 5 days before the leave of absence is required. The headteacher will consider the reason for absence and respond on behalf of the headteacher and governors.

4.3. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. School can be notified of absences through Studybugs or phonecall.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Some pupils, such as those with long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, may face greater barriers to attendance than others. We will work with parents to still share high expectations for school attendance but also to offer additional support and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

4.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- ☐ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- ☐ After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil arrives late after the register has closed for a session, the appropriate code applies to the whole of that session.

The headteacher reviews the data for children who are raise concern due to punctuality and will inform parents of this concern in a letter. The school will also work with the parent to try to overcome the issue of lateness.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- ☐ Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may raise this as a concern to outside agencies as necessary
- ☐ Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- ☐ Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- ☐ Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken. If absence continues, the school will take further advice e.g. contacting the local authority School Attendance Team, MASH.

6. Reporting to parents/carers

The headteacher is given on a ½ termly basis an overview of all pupil absence highlighting those pupils who have been absent for children whose attendance is below 95%. The school expect all children to attend school on a regular basis. The current national figure for children attending primary school is 96.5%.

- Parents are contacted on first day of absence if notification has not been received.
- Letters are sent to parents if attendance is causing concern:

1. Green – Letter & Attendance sheet.
2. Amber – Letter & Attendance sheet. This will request evidence to support absences relating to medical appointments/illness. School may also refer your child to the School Nurses.
3. Red – Final letter sent & referral to School Attendance Team (SAT) for Fixed Penalty Notice or School Attendance Panel. A school attendance panel may be arranged where 15 or more sessions have been missed. (see School Local Authority Guidance)

- Late letters are also sent where children are consistently late.
- Pupils who attend school after the registers have closed will marked as unauthorised absence

- When attendance reads at 10 sessions of absence or more in a term the headteacher will review and, where appropriate, raise a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

7. Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will always be in place for the shortest time necessary and not treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents.

The local authority must be notified of any part-time timetables and the plan for return to full time education. They should never be open-ended. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat this absence as authorised.

8. Alternative provision

Any pupils who attend alternative provision are dual registered but remain the responsibility of the school. We will regularly check the attendance, behaviour and progress of dual registered pupils and raise any concerns about absence with the alternative provision and/or parents as necessary, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, and in accordance with any **leave of absence request form** (LOAF), accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If no explanation is received absences cannot be authorised.

There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory reason for the absence, or approval has been given in advance. For example:

- Illness/sickness, medical appointment (medical evidence of appointment required), attending a funeral
- Religious circumstances (where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong)
- Participation in sporting competition, artistic performance, or examination
- Circumstance linked to parent in HM Armed Forces (MOD advice)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

- **Unauthorised absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school following a parental request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be absent from school e.g. shopping for uniform, birthdays, visiting other family members
 - absences which have not been explained or a satisfactory explanation received

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information has been presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child has been unwell but on return to school there is compelling evidence that they have been on a family holiday.

If a child has more than 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence in a term, then the matter will be referred to the local authority School Attendance Team for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

Escalation of procedures – see 4.6

If attendance does not improve following a letter raising concern an amber or red letter will be sent, depending on the reason and severity of number of absences. The red letter is notification of referral to SAT.

Legal sanctions

The school through the local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- ☐ The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- ☐ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without authorisation

- ❑ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- ❑ If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting good attendance

Our aim is to encourage families to ensure children regularly attend school.

We reward good attendance; on the roll of honour on the newsletter, in assembly and 100% termly and annual are rewarded with a local visit or activity and a trophy.

We support families by:

- ❑ Providing information on the school website regarding absence related to illnesses
- ❑ Encouraging families to contact the member of staff working with the family to listen to, understand and discuss any barriers, worries or concerns
- ❑ Recognising there are other factors affecting children's attendance such as poor sleep, change in family circumstances, ongoing medical conditions etc.
- ❑ Providing access to Senco, Mental Health Support Team, Parenting Surgeries, Family Early Support, school nursing team, other agencies
- ❑ Engaging in city-wide priorities and initiatives such as the Portsmouth Education Partnership Education strategy and relational practice work
- ❑ Each phase has a member of staff with have specific attendance caseloads. They will lead Interventions with these children.

We promote good attendance at our school by:

- ❑ Ensuring that good attendance is everyone's business
- ❑ Incentives to encourage good attendance, such as stickers, certificates and rewards
- ❑ Aiming for 100% attendance and setting aspirational targets at a whole-school, year group, class and individual level
- ❑ Celebrating improved attendance
- ❑ Regular updates for parents and carers in newsletters and the school's channels of communication such as our Facebook page.

7. Attendance data and monitoring

8.

Timing	Actions
Daily	Office from registers
Weekly	Staff interventions with specific cases Class certificate for best attendance
Half-termly	Headteacher and letters informing parents of absences

Termly	100% attendees rewarded with a visit or activity
Annually	100% attendees receive special trophy in the end of year assembly

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- ☐ Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- ☐ Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- ☐ Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- ☐ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- ☐ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- ☐ Provide regular attendance reports to classteachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- ☐ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and **severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- ☐ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- ☐ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- ☐ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Headteacher holds meeting with parents to support with strategies for improving attendance.

9. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE [working together to improve school attendance](#) (May 2022), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

10. Links with other policies/documentation

This policy specifically links to the following policy and/or documents:

- ☐ Child protection and safeguarding policy
- ☐ Behaviour and relationships policy
- ☐ DfE [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- ☐ DfE [Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- ☐ DfE [Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities](#) (Published May 2022, **Applies from Sept 2023**)
- ☐ PCC [Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#) (Sept 2016)
- ☐ DfE [Keeping Children safe in Education](#) (Sept 2022)
- ☐ [Ofsted School Inspection handbook](#) (Sept 2022)

11. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum three years by headteacher and governors. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day