



St. George's C of E Primary School
School Street, Barrow in Furness,
Cumbria, LA14 2JN
Telephone (01229) 841240 Fax (01229) 841249
mail: office@stgeorges.cumbria.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S A Herbert B.A.(Hons), NPQH

Pupil Attendance Policy and Procedures

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**ST. GEORGE'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This includes - Unauthorised leave (holiday in term time).

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in Sept 2013 which states: 'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

St. George's C of E Primary School would interpret "exceptional" in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but the normality will be that requests for authorised absence will be refused.

St. George's C of E Primary School will not set work for use for unauthorised leave and request during SATS are not considered under any circumstances

St. George's C of E Primary School will comply with legislation and request the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of 10 sessions, 5 days, or more. This can be added up over the school year.

- Payment of a penalty within 21 days of receipt of the notice is £60 (subject to regulatory change).
- Payment after this time, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £120 (subject to regulatory change).
- Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the 28 day time limit will trigger a prosecution process under the provisions of section 444 of the 1996 act or section 103 of the 2006 act.

Penalty Notices can also be considered for:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

St. George's C of E Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement and attendance. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our School will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our School will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for absences to be authorised. Pupils should only be absent from school if they are unfit. School can support with the administration of medication with parental permission. Parents are encouraged to liaise with school to take advice regarding any uncertainties.

Objectives:

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality in order for our pupils to achieve their full potential
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the School
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives.

Parents of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern may be referred to The Pupil Welfare Service for additional support and advice. Legislation will be enforced under S444(1) or (1)(A) of the Education Act 1996 if attendance fails to improve.

Information:

This identifies the information held by the school and will be considered when dealing with attendance and punctuality issues:

- Registration: our gates open at 8.45am and Registration begins at 8.55am. A child arriving after 9.05am will be marked as 'Late'. A child arriving after 9.20am will be marked as unauthorised late when the registers close at 9.20am.
- Guidance for staff on the accurate completion of registers
- The importance of punctuality and the response to lateness. If a child arrives at school after 9.05 a.m. they will be marked late.
- Daily contact between parents and School when a child is absent.
- In line with Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is generally required for any pupil with a vomiting or diarrhoea virus. Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence for absences.
- Clear guidance to parents that Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Referral routes with roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems (Parents of pupils with attendance below 90% and just above will be contacted, and may also be contacted if attendance is unexpectedly below 95%)
- The inclusion of attendance information in School documentation, e.g. the website, reports, newsletters, home-school agreements.
- Annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance.
- The Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to set realistic targets; these targets may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

School Target

Our school target for attendance is set at 96% for 2019-20 For the academic year 2017/18 St. George's CofE Primary and Nursery School's attendance was 95.2 % with 4.8% recorded as Overall Absence and 8.9% recorded as Persistent Absence.

Persistent Absence Definition

Attendance below 90% is defined by the DFE as persistent absence. Parents of pupils who are in this category or just above will be contacted by school or the Pupil Welfare Service to discuss the situation to allow opportunity for change

Definition Of "Parent"

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not patterns and trends in the school's attendance and pupils' punctuality are improved:

- Parental response to absence has improved
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance by celebrating good attendance within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and aware of the attendance procedures operating within school
- Parents and governors are made aware of the current law on attendance
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies or PSHE lessons.

Parents are requested to:

- Ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Contact school on the first day of absence and provide medical evidence if prescribed or when requested
- Avoid taking holidays in term time as this will be recorded as unauthorised leave
- Attend meetings as requested
- Raise any concerns with school early
- Support school with agreed plans and interventions

Monitoring Procedures

St. George's C of E Primary School works in partnership with the Pupil Welfare Service. Regular meetings are held where attendance is analysed and vulnerable children are targeted to improve attendance. Home visits will be made to parents of children causing concern. Parents are informed half termly, in writing, of their child's attendance through a traffic light system.

Green - Attendance over 95% - no concerns about attendance, please keep it up!

Amber - Attendance of 90% - 95% - potential cause for concern needs improvement.

Red - Attendance below 90% - this is classed as 'Persistent Absence' by the government and requires action.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class teachers take the register each session.

The School Office contact parents/carers if children are absent without prior notification.

The Head teacher, School Office, Pupil Welfare Officer and Governing Body monitor patterns and trends

The Head teacher is responsible for decisions about any leave of absence requested for exceptional circumstances during term time, referrals to the Pupil Welfare Service and reporting any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate agency.

Good Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Parents are obliged to inform school if they are leaving the area or changing schools so as appropriate tracking can be put in place. Pupils that stop attending with no confirmed

destination will be reported to the children missing from education team within the Local Authority. Pupils will only be removed from roll in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

- Rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance.

Strategies for improving and promoting attendance

- Pupils will be referred to The Pupil Welfare Service
- Attendance will be recognised and celebrated in class and assemblies, House points, stickers, extra play times, rewards, PHSE, circle time etc.....
- Attendance awareness will be evident at inductions, parents evening, newsletters
- School operate a first day calling system and will offer appropriate support and advice
- If no contact school or the Pupil Welfare Service may home visit to establish the reason for absence
- Differentiated curriculum for pupils to meet their needs

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

Approved at full governor meeting, September 26th 2019: