



St George's Primary School is a Church of England school that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of each child.

Our School Aim: to help all children reach their full potential and develop an enthusiasm for lifelong learning within a caring and Christian environment, preparing them to be valuable members of society.

...Learning today for a better tomorrow

Policy Title:	Attendance Policy
LT Responsibility:	Head of School
Review Body:	Executive Headteacher
Date:	September 2018
Review:	September 2019

We recognise that our pupils bring with them a wide variety of behaviours influenced by life experiences outside school. We aim to respond to each case professionally, objectively and compassionately. We are sensitive when working with children and families with specific needs and experiences and we continuously seek ways to promote successful partnerships. The basis of differentiation will vary dependant on the needs of each case but we will take into account the views of parents and families, colleagues and external agencies together with any Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan. We will also ensure compliance with the trust's Equality Policy taking into account pupils with protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Both the school and trust respects the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. By following the trust's Equality Policy, the school seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by such legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Equality Policy

<https://www.aquinastrust.org/about/policies>

Context

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The 'otherwise' includes home education. Children must remain in full-time education for as long as they are of compulsory school age.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations make provisions for the necessity of admission registers and attendance registers of pupils as well as the granting of leave of absence for pupils. There is no entitlement for pupils to be granted leave of absence for holidays during term time, only the Executive Headteacher or those authorised by the Executive Headteacher can do this. Schools may authorise any absence but inappropriate use can be just as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence.



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St George's CE Primary School is a Christian school that empowers everyone to fulfil their unique, God given potential in a safe, caring and creative learning environment. Through inclusive and inspirational teaching every child will make rapid progress and succeed as a life-long learner in an ever changing world. Monitoring and controlling school attendance are a key part of St George's Church of England Primary School's objectives. We believe that:

- Responsibility for promoting school attendance is shared by everyone at the academy;
- The attendance policy touches all aspects of the school's life, and relates directly to the academy's values, ethos and curriculum;
- Rigorous collection and analysis of data about attendance enables the academy to check its progress against measurable outcomes.

St George's seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full-time education. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the academy is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. Research demonstrates a clear link between good attainment and good attendance. We strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school. The Executive Headteacher has responsibility for whole school attendance as well as oversight of the academy's pupil welfare system.

The Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the Trust), the academy, the Executive Headteacher and Head of School believe that it is important that the children in their care do not lose any schooling unnecessarily. In the primary phase this places the responsibility on parents and carers to ensure regular attendance.

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Objectives and targets

The aims of this policy are to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and therefore take full advantage of the educational opportunities available;
- The academy is set a challenging attendance target each year by the Trust. The Executive Headteacher/ Head of School will report on attendance percentages to the Trust on a half termly basis;
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the academy;
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;
- Ensure that our policy applies to reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued as well as support the growth in pupil of a sense of their own responsibility for attendance;
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance;
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

This policy is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher to review and approve. The Head of School is jointly responsible with the Executive Headteacher for the implementation of this policy.

Rewards for Attendance

St George's has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils and parent/carers to improve their attendance and timekeeping. At the end of each half term pupils will receive a reward if they have 100% attendance. All pupils who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year will attend an organised treat.



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Teachers and staff will build a 'culture' within the academy of the importance of good attendance and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parent/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Action plan

St George's undertakes the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes;
- Maintain appropriate attendance data;
- Communicate the attendance procedures and expectations to all colleagues, parents and pupils;
- Maintain consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness;
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness (if parents and families have not communicated with a first day contact) with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge;
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence;
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- Work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- Refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents and families have not responded to academy initiatives;
- Report attendance statistics to appropriate external agencies;
- Maintain a reward system for good attendance;

In order to deal with attendance problems effectively and efficiently, the following strategy will be followed by the academy:

- Registers will be marked accurately;
- Attendance records kept for every class;
- The academy monitors all pupils whose attendance is below 96%. Parents may be asked to attend an interview with the Education Welfare Officer and Family Worker should their child's attendance fall below this. Parents will be reminded of their obligations to ensure attendance and a programme of support will be agreed if necessary. On a further occurrence, parents will be reminded of the legal action that can be taken and the fine that can be imposed by the Education Welfare Service;
- The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be informed about continued or persistent absence, and habitual lateness. The school may refer individual cases to the EWS/Local



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Authority for Fixed Penalty Notices in line with EWS guidance where unauthorised absence may impact on the pupil's learning and development;

- The school cannot authorise family holidays. Other requests will be considered on an individual basis and will not normally be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

Further details of attendance monitoring are found at appendix 2.

Parents will have the responsibility to:

- Make sure their children are educated between the age of 5 and 11 to the fullest extent.
- Inform the academy on the first day of absence and secure prior authority for authorised absences.
- Co-operate with the academy and the Education Welfare Service if there are attendance problems.
- Make sure that their child has had a good night's sleep – children need to be wide-awake to learn.

All requests should be submitted using a "Notification of Leave of Absence" form in a timely manner, preferably a fortnight in advance of any absence, for the request to be processed. The form notifies the academy of the parents' intention to take their child out of school. The academy's response to this request in turn informs parents how the academy will record such an absence in the register. It is the responsibility of the parent to appropriately act on this information in light of this policy.

Parents do not have the right to take children on holiday in term-time. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and will not normally be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

Registration and Punctuality

All children should be in their classroom by 9.00am. Electronic registration is used in all year groups and taken twice per day at 09.05am and 1.05/1.15pm.

A school day counts as 2 marks of attendance using the standard school's Registration Codes:

- Morning registration ends at 9.05am. If a pupil arrives after this time he/she should be accompanied by the parent to the office. Any pupil arriving after 9.30am will become an unauthorised absence and marked as an absentee for the whole of the morning session.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal academy hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.



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- Please note the school day ends at 3.15pm/3.25pm. Please be prompt when collecting your children from the academy.

Illness and Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. However we are aware that appointments during school time are sometimes unavoidable. 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.

Following an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea pupils are requested to remain away from school for a period of 48 hrs. This is in line with guidance from the Health Protection Agency for schools and childcare settings and helps to reduce the spread of infection between pupils. As with any absence, a note is required from the child's parent/carer explaining the reasons for absence. For absences sited as medical for a week or more, or persistent medical absences, a letter from the child's GP, hospital or dentist may be requested.

Absence

- Parent/carers are requested to telephone on the first day of absence before 9.30am or as early as possible and leave a message on 0208 4604266.
- The academy's office staff will endeavour to contact the parent/carers if no message has been received regarding the reason for the pupil absence.
- If there is any doubt regarding the whereabouts of a child, the academy will contact the parent/carers immediately in order to ascertain the safety of the child. Please ensure your contact details are up to date with the academy office by supplying any change of address or telephone number

Authorised Absence: An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. Examples of this are genuine sickness supported by proof of illness where possible, unavoidable medical/dental appointments (a copy of the appointment letter/card will be required), family bereavement and days of religious observation. Please note only the academy can make an absence authorised, parent/carers do not have this authority.

Unauthorised Absence: This is where the academy has not received information from the parent/carers regarding the absence or where the reason for the absence is one that the academy cannot authorise. Parentally condoned unjustified absence and persistent absence may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Requests for Leave during Term Time

Leave during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and is not an entitlement. One of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new



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academic year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class, and for year 6 pupils in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests. It is therefore strongly discouraged by the Government, the Trust, the Executive Headteacher and the Head of School.

All special leave requests should be discussed with the Head of School before any arrangements are made as authorisation will not be granted retrospectively. Any absence for leave that has not been agreed by the Head of School will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per child (raising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days). Penalty Notices are issued by the Bromley Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. Any money received through these fines goes directly to Bromley Local Authority, meaning that the school does not and cannot profit from Notices being issued.

A request for leave during term time will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays

Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Please note that parent/carers may be asked to produce a medical note from a GP if absences described as sickness occur immediately prior or after term holidays. It will be the decision of the academy's attendance officer and Head of School whether such absences are counted as 'unauthorised' and therefore could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 (rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days) being issued by the Bromley Local Authority's Education Welfare Service.

Long Term Absence

If your child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the academy can send material home to enable your child to keep up with school work. Please speak to your child's Class Teacher. There may be times when a medical letter from the child's GP, hospital, or dentist is requested by the academy's attendance officer to cover long-term absences. If a child is absent for a long period of time, a meeting may be arranged with the parent/carers, class teacher and Head of School to discuss re-integration strategies to assist the child with their return to school.

Repeated Unauthorised Absence

Attendance and punctuality are monitored daily by the academy's attendance officer. Unauthorised absences remain on the child's attendance record.

The academy's attendance officer and the Head of School will seek to resolve any problems regarding a pupil's attendance as early as possible. However, if a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences or the pupil's attendance falls below 90% the Education Welfare Officer will be informed, appropriate letters will be sent and the parent/carers contacted to clarify the circumstances and reinforce the academy policy.



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If there is no improvement at this stage the parent/carers will be invited into the academy to discuss the problem with the Education Welfare Officer. The academy's attendance officer and Educational Welfare Officer may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

If there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance following discussions and parent/carers repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school, the academy has the right to consider legal action.

It is important that parent/carers co-operate with the academy and the Education Welfare Service in order to resolve any difficulties early before any legal action becomes necessary.

Children missing education

Children Missing Education refers to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, or being educated otherwise and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time. We are committed to ensuring that all children receive a quality education and Bromley council guarantees a robust response to any information received about a child who is thought to be missing from education.

If we suspect a child has been removed from the school and is not attending another school we will contact the Education Welfare Service. On notification, the allocated officer will undertake all relevant enquiries; contact the family in order to support them to reengage with education.

If at any time we have a reasonable concern that a child has suffered significant harm or may be at immediate or acute risk of suffering significant harm, we would make a referral to Children's Social Care.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Head of School will work with the attendance officer to keep attendance regularly under review and report to the Executive Headteacher. The policy will be evaluated by the Executive Headteacher.

Reviewing

The policy will be reviewed and altered in the light of any concerns brought by any of the above and where changes in legislation make it.

DATA PROTECTION

St George's CE Primary School [The Academy] processes personal data, some of which will be sensitive personal data, in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Academy complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust Data Protection Policy.



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All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Academy safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.