



# **Attendance Policy**

## **2019-2020**

## SIR WILLIAM STANIER SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE POLICY: *SWS – all in this together*

#### Principles of the Sir William Stanier Attendance Policy

At SWS, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. **Education is important.** Students should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

#### Aims

- To promote good attendance and punctuality through a clear framework of expectations in terms of attendance that is accepted by parents/carers, students, staff and Governors.
- To engage the support of parents/carers in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- To keep appropriate electronic records of attendance through school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To closely investigate and act immediately where unauthorised absence is confirmed or suspected.
- To closely monitor students with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents/carers and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.
- To work closely with a number of external partners to improve individual pupil and whole Academy attendance.
- To recognise and reward good attendance as part of the *SWS – all in this together* strategy.

#### All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

- 6 out of 10 students with over 95% attendance (missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE 4+ grades (or equivalent)
- Only 1 in 10 students who are poor attendees gain 5 GCSE 4+ grades (or equivalent)

#### Legislation

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school the parent is guilty of an offence”.

Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable students to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent/carer, both parents and/or carers.

#### Procedures

- Students are expected to attend Sir William Stanier School for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for the absence.
- Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students. They are legal documents that must be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a Court of Law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at Sir William Stanier School.

- The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the D of E. One school day is marked as two sessions - a.m. and p.m.
- At Sir William Stanier School the attendance register is taken in form time starting at 8.40am, at the start of each lesson with a number 1 to 4 based on Attitude To Learning scores and the second session is lesson 4.
- On each occasion, it must be recorded whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to other Exceptional Circumstances.

The school follows the *SWS – all in this together* approach to monitor attendance:

<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 100%.</b></p> <p>As well as being an excellent attender your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education or the world of work.</p>
<b>GOOD</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 96-99%</b></p> <p>Your child is likely to achieve their grades that will give them real opportunities to continue their studies or in the world of work.</p>
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 95%.</b></p>
<b>UNSATISFACTORY</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 94-90%. They are below the national government threshold of 95%.</b></p> <p>Your child will miss up to 18 days each school year and this will make it difficult for them to achieve their best.</p>
<b>CONCERN</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is between 85-90%.</b></p> <p><b>Parents / Carers may</b> face a fixed penalty fine as your child's attendance is below 90% and they are 'Persistent Absentees'. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons or work.</p>
<b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is below 85%</b></p> <p><b>Parents/Carers will</b> face a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve! Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for her to keep in touch with lessons or work.</p>

### Whole School approach to attendance

The Academy incorporates a whole school approach towards attendance. The staged process is collated centrally. It identifies the categories and the actions taken by the staff in response to each attendance threshold.

# FLOWCHART OF ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

## STAGE 1

- Data to be analysed on a 2-3 week basis (at least twice a half term)

Data to look at:

**95% and below**

**14+ 'I' codes (both of these on a 'rolling' basis from September) 10 'G' codes (within a term i.e. Autumn, Spring, Summer)**

**10 + 'O' and 'U' codes (termly as above)**

**PA Threshold (to ensure all students on this list are being 'actioned')**



## STAGE 2

- Decisions to be made which letters need to be sent out to parents
  - \*\***Letter 1** (which is an informative letter)
- **Letter 2 – Attendance Meeting Letter/Invite** for parent. The LA views this as an early intervention tool targeted at students below 95% attendance.
- **Medical Evidence Letter** – this can be considered (once the threshold of 14+ illness absences has been reached) at **any** stage of the process when it becomes appropriate to do so.



## STAGE 3

- When a student has accrued at least 10 (but not more than 26) sessions of 'O' and/or 'U' codes within a termly period, and an Attendance Meeting has been offered, school should consider requesting an **FPN Warning Letter** from the LA.



## STAGE 4

- 10+ 'G' codes – if a student has accrued 10+ consecutive 'G' codes within a termly period, school request an **FPN** from the LA.

It is vital that data is analysed and actioned on a regular basis to ensure there is 'no drift' and also that the evidence fits within the required timescales stipulated by the LA/Legal Services.

School should ensure that all attendance interventions are recorded in an appropriate central place.

## Letters

The process incorporates a series of letters which are delivered to parents/carers, alerting them to a pupil's attendance and entering into a particular threshold. These also incur specific actions which are recorded on the centrally held database.

### **ATTENDANCE LETTERS**

POTENTIAL PERSISTENT ABSENCE = 96% and below

PERSISTENT ABSENCE = 90% and below

#### **LETTER 1:** THIS LETTER IS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Letter 1 is sent to notify parents/carers that a pupil has 95% or less attendance (**unauthorised and authorised absence**). It offers parents/carers an initial opportunity to communicate with school if there are specific problems that impact upon attendance.

#### **LETTER 2:** THIS LETTER IS FOR ACTION BY PARENTS/CARERS

Letter 2 advises parents/carers that since Letter 1 has been sent absences have continued (**authorised and unauthorised**). It invites parents/carers into school to discuss the situation to see if there is any further support school can offer. It offers school an opportunity to discuss the consequences of continued poor attendance i.e. Fixed Penalty Notice. The LA will expect a meeting with parents/carers to have taken and an Action Plan drawn up for the students **before** the Fixed Penalty Notice process can be considered.

#### **MEDICAL EVIDENCE LETTER:** THIS LETTER IS INFORMATIVE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

School policy states that after a student has taken 14 sessions of authorised illness during an academic year, formal medical evidence will be requested before any further illness absences can be authorised. Formal medical evidence does not need to be a letter from the GP, but could be a prescription or prescribed medication or a GP/Nurse signature on a GP Surgery compliment slip or dated GP/Nurse appointment card.

#### **First day contact**

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform Sir William Stanier School of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible, through the absence hotline and on every day of absence thereafter.
- If no contact is achieved from parent/carer on their child's first day of absence Sir William Stanier School will contact home by telephone. If no telephone contact can be achieved a home visit is undertaken on the same day.

#### **Coding of absence**

Although it is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify Sir William Stanier School of any absence it is at the school's discretion how this absence is coded in relation to authorised or unauthorised absence.

## **Absence due to illness**

- Any medical absences in excess of 7 days (14 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received, then the absence will be coded as unauthorised.
- Medical evidence can take the form of either a dated GP/Nurse appointment card, a dated note from the GP/Nurse written in the student's planner, a compliment slip signed and dated by the GP/Nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness.
- Parents/carers should be aware that ten or more unauthorised absences over a term may result in them receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

## **Unauthorised absences: Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)**

- Parents/carers should be aware that Sir William Stanier School may contact the Local Authority if a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.
- The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.
- Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.
- If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

## **Punctuality to school and lessons**

- Students should be in Form for registration by 8.40 am. Any student arriving during registration but before registers close will be coded as 'L'. Staff will add number of minutes late.
- Any student arriving late has a lunchtime detention that same day for 15 minutes in F3.
- Any student arriving late to lesson will be sanctioned according to the Ready To Learn Behaviour policy.

## **Leave of absence**

- As from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 any requests made for a holiday to be taken in the academic year 2017-18 or thereafter which is not considered by the Head Teacher to be in Exceptional Circumstances, will be recorded as unauthorised. If any application is declined and a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised absences occur a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.
- Any parent/carer wishing to request Leave of Absence for their child should complete a Request for Leave of Absence Form that will be considered by Mrs A Norton, Vice Principal.

## **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

At Sir William Stanier School we believe students who achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded. This serves two purposes:

- It provides students with positive reinforcement.
- It provides other students with motivation to improve their attendance and it recognises

that good regular attendance is an achievement.

The Raising Standards Lead will take responsibility for arranging celebration/praise assemblies for attendance on a termly basis. The positive message of the value of regular attendance is always to the forefront of assemblies and meetings with parents/carers. At the end of each term letters will be sent to parents/carers of students who achieved 100% attendance over the course of the term.

### **Strategies to address poor attendance and make improvements**

At Sir William Stanier School the attendance of all our students is monitored regularly. If there are concerns regarding attendance parent/carers will be notified.

- If attendance does not improve parents/carers will be invited into Sir William Stanier School for a meeting to discuss the poor attendance/punctuality with a view to resolving the situation.
- If students engage in internal truancy they will be logged and sanctioned according to the Ready To Learn Behaviour policy receiving an Isolation placement.
- Sir William Stanier works closely with Education Welfare Consultants, other outside agencies and the Local Authority to improve attendance without the need for any legal intervention.
- As a final measure when the attendance of a student does not show any improvements without good reason, Sir William Stanier School will contact the Local Authority regarding legal sanctions.

Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those students who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.)

### **Long Term Absence**

Mrs A Norton, Vice Principal and Mrs Kay Banks SENDCo are responsible for supporting students with long term absence. They will complete a Medical Needs Form to access appropriate support and if necessary, home tuition for the student. They will also liaise on a regular basis with the Raising Standards Lead to support the achievement and reintegration of students with long term absence.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is 90% and below over the school year. Students with this level of attendance fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition, 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)'

When a student's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) they will be allocated to the Parental Liaison Officer who will track the attendance on a weekly basis alongside their Form Tutor. **The student's Raising Standards Lead will contact parents/carers to have a meeting and discuss the attendance concerns and formalise an Attendance Support Plan to secure an improvement in attendance.** The school may also consider implementing a Parenting Agreement if the student continues to be absent from school without authorisation.

A Parenting Agreement is a voluntary agreement between the school and parent, and will contain improvement targets with set timescales and an overview of the support provided by the school to support the child and family. Parental failure to comply with the contract may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute parents.

- The student's attendance will be monitored for a two-week period. If the student attends school every day during this period parents will receive a letter congratulating the student on this improvement. If the student is absent from school during this monitoring period parents will be expected to provide medical evidence (i.e. – medical appointment cards, copy of prescription, letters concerning hospital appointments, letters from professional organisations (CAMHS), print screen of medical notes, doctor's medical certificate). After four weeks if there continues to be no improvement in attendance then a Governors Attendance Panel will be called to review the case. Following this if there continues to be no improvement in attendance and absences remain unauthorised, the school will undertake the necessary legal action against the parents. This will initially result in school applying to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to parents/carers. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

### **Class Teacher Responsibility**

1. Registers **MUST** be taken in the first 10 minutes of the lesson and saved
2. If a student doesn't arrive for your lesson, code as 'N'
3. If a student arrives late to your lesson, please alter your register according to the RTL policy; using a 3. Registers must be updated if the pupil arrives to your class.
4. There should be no other student in your classroom other than your designated class.

### **Form Tutor Responsibility - 99% to 95%**

1. Collect your Attendance folder from Julie Baker every Monday morning (available in briefing). Return it to JB every Friday morning (available in briefing)  
The folder contains your Form's overall attendance and pupil by pupil breakdown.
2. Display your weekly attendance on the attendance board in your Form room.
3. Ensure that this is updated weekly.
4. Throughout the week have targeted conversations with pupils whose attendance falls below 97%.
5. If a pupil's attendance continues to drop, then you will need to contact parents. These calls are supportive and to make parents aware that their child's attendance is dropping.
5. Record in the folder when these conversations have happened.
6. Make contact with parents/carers to support these conversations and to build a relationship with the parents.
7. Record when these conversations happened in your folder.

### **Pastoral Manager Responsibility (supported by Raising Standards Lead)– 94% to 90%**

1. Know the cumulative attendance figures for the Year group cohort, monitor the daily attendance and discuss actions with the Raising Standard Lead and School Attendance Officer.
2. Where required, contact home to discuss attendance with parent/carer. Identifying barriers and communicating with relevant staff in school to ensure successful integration and attendance.
3. Facilitate meetings with parents/carers and liaise with RSL around actions.
4. Where required, complete home visits.

### **Raising Standards Lead Responsibility – Overall responsibility for Year group’s attendance**

1. Know the attendance figures for your cohort, in particular the group breakdowns.
2. Ensure (through weekly meeting) that all Form Tutors are meeting the expectations (above)
3. Liaise with Pastoral Manager (where appropriate) and School Attendance Manager to coordinate actions to improve attendance in the 95% and below cohort.
4. Contact parents/carers to arrange meetings and discuss any concerns; formalising any Attendance Action Plans to secure an improvement in attendance.
5. If the student continues to be absent from school without authorisation, implement a Parenting Agreement where required.
6. Feedback to SLT link around areas for concerns and successes, at Line Management, in order to ensure attendance improves across the cohort.
7. Arrange suitable celebrations with pupils to acknowledge improvements.

### **Improving attendance – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:**

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that they can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure they have an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child’s planner can help you to do this.
3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
4. Check with the school’s Attendance Manager if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school.
5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please contact the Principal and decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
6. Encourage your child to come to school even if they are feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and the school will contact you if it becomes necessary.
7. Talk positively about going to school – “What was good about school today?” “Did anything funny happen?”
8. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your child’s Form Tutor or Raising Standards Lead before the concerns escalate.

### **Improving attendance – WHAT SCHOOL DOES:**

1. Marks the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
2. Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted the school of the absence of their child on a particular day.
3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.
5. Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when patterns of absence are causing concerns.
6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.
7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
8. Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
9. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
10. Works with relevant external agencies if a student’s attendance becomes a concern, i.e. – Social Care, CAMHS, Pupil Support Service, and Police.

### **MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY**

This policy is monitored as a matter of course by those responsible for its day-to-day operation. Attendance data and trends are analysed regularly to identify trends and patterns and initiate appropriate responses. The Policy is evaluated and reviewed regularly.

POLICY REVIEW DATE .....