ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL
A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to ensuring that all families recognise the importance of **100% attendance**. Regular school attendance is **crucial for academic success**. Research indicates that pupils with attendance below **95%** are significantly less likely to achieve **five GCSEs at grade 5 or above**, which can limit their future opportunities and career prospects.

For these reasons, we **closely monitor attendance patterns** and hold parents accountable where necessary. We expect all pupils to attend school **whenever possible**, even if they are feeling slightly unwell. Attendance monitoring will begin when a student's attendance drops below 97%

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing committee

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Laura Gilderdale and can be contacted via stgattendance@cidari.co.uk

3.4 The attendance manager

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- **Monitoring and Analysing Attendance Data**: Regularly tracking attendance trends and patterns (see Section 7).
- **Benchmarking Attendance:** Comparing attendance data to identify key areas for improvement.
- **Providing Reports and Raising Concerns**: Producing regular attendance reports and reporting any concerns to the designated senior leader for attendance and the headteacher.
- **Addressing Persistent Absence:** Working closely with Pupil Welfare Officers (PWOs) to tackle persistent, severe, and broken weeks of attendance.
- **Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices:** Advising the headteacher, Designated Lead, or PWO (authorised by the headteacher) on when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- **Ensuring Accurate Attendance Records:** Making sure that all authorised and unauthorised absences are correctly recorded on the school system.
- **Managing Student Records on SIMS:** Ensuring that all linked documents from home visits and meetings are uploaded to the student's file on SIMS for accurate record-keeping.
- **Escalating Attendance Concerns:** Transferring calls to the Pastoral Support Worker (PSW) lead and Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) where necessary to provide specialist support and intervention.
- The Attendance Manager is Kim Newman, who can be contacted via **stgattendance@cidari.co.uk.**

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

- Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for **recording attendance daily**, ensuring the correct codes are used, and submitting this information to the school

office **on the same day**. This includes taking attendance at the **start of every lesson** being taught.

- This process is **crucial for the safeguarding of every child in school**, ensuring their wellbeing and safety at all times.

3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- **Handle Absence Calls**: Receive and record calls from **parents, guardians, or carers** regarding pupil absences on a **day-to-day basis**, ensuring all information is accurately logged on the school system.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- **Ensure Punctual Attendance**: Make sure their child attends **every timetabled session** on time.
- **Report Absences Promptly**: Call the school to report their child's absence **before 8:30 am** on the first day of absence and on **each subsequent day**, providing an expected return date.
- **Provide Emergency Contacts**: Supply the school with **more than one emergency contact number** for their child.
- **Schedule Appointments Outside School Hours**: Wherever possible, arrange **medical and other appointments** outside of the school day to minimise disruption to learning.
- **Work in Partnership with the School**: Collaborate with the school to ensure their child's **attendance remains high**, addressing any concerns or barriers to regular attendance

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Attendance Register and Procedures

- We will maintain an attendance register and ensure that all pupils are recorded on this register.
- Attendance will be recorded twice daily:
  - At the start of the first session of the school day.
  - Once during the second session of the school day.
- Each pupil's attendance will be marked as one of the following:
  - Present
  - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
  - Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Additional Attendance Records:
  - Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
  - The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
  - The specific circumstances if a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Registration Timings:
  - Morning registration (form session) will take place between 8:15 – 8:40 am. Pupils arriving after 8.15am will receive a late mark.
  - Afternoon registration will take place at 13.30pm.
- Statutory Requirement: Morning and afternoon registration is a legal obligation, and these duties are carried out daily by the teaching staff.

For further details on attendance codes, please refer to Appendix 1 of the DfE Attendance Guidelines.

4.2 Unplanned absence

- **Reporting Absences**: Parents/carers must inform the school of the reason for any **unplanned absence** on the first day by **8:30 am**, or as soon as reasonably possible, by contacting the school's **administration/office staff** (see also **Section 7**).
- **Mild Illness and Attendance**: If a pupil has a **mild headache or cold**, parents are encouraged to **send them to school**. The school will assess their condition, and if they are deemed too unwell, appropriate arrangements will be made for them to be sent home.
- **Evidence for Authorised Absences**: If a pupil's **attendance falls below 97%**, parents/carers must provide one of the following for the absence to be authorised:
  - **A doctor's note**
  - **A medical appointment card**
  - **A prescription for medication**
- **Unauthorised Absences**: If none of the above are provided and the students attendance falls below 97%, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised.** If a parent or guardian does not contact the school to explain their child's absence after two consecutive days without communication, a home visit will be conducted. We recognise that illness during the first few weeks of the academic year can have a significant impact on a pupil's overall attendance and may not accurately reflect their usual attendance pattern. Therefore, where a pupil has an unauthorised absence during the first half term and their attendance falls below 97%, the headteacher may, at their discretion, review the pupil's attendance record from the previous academic year when determining whether a subsequent absence should be authorised or unauthorised.
- ***Compulsory intervention:*** All students who are timetabled to attend an intervention session at the end of the school day are required to do so. Any absence that is not agreed in advance or supported with appropriate evidence will be treated as truancy and will result in further sanctions.

4.3 Planned absence

- **Scheduling Appointments**: We encourage parents/carers to arrange **medical and dental appointments** outside of school hours wherever possible. If this is not feasible, the pupil should be absent from school for the **shortest time necessary**.

- **Minimising Time Off:** A **full day off** should not be necessary if a student has an appointment during the school day. The attendance team must be emailed with the relevant medical evidence to authorise the absence.

- **Requesting Term-Time Absence**: Parents/carers must request **any other type of term-time absence** as far in advance as possible.Please refer to **Section 5** for details on which absences the school is authorised to approve.

- **Holidays:** Families are reminded that holidays should not be booked during term time. Regular school attendance is vital for every child's education and future success. Any holidays taken during term time that result in an accumulation of 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 full school days) missed will lead to the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

The school morning register will open at 8.15am and close at 8.50am.

Pupil Arriving Late to School:

- **Before the Register Closes:** The pupil will be marked as *late* using the appropriate code **(L)**. A same-day detention will be issued based on the number of minutes late, in accordance with the *Lates Detention Table*.
- **After the Register Has Closed:** The pupil will be marked with an *unauthorised absence* using the appropriate code **(U)**. A same-day detention will still be issued, determined by how late the pupil arrived, as outlined in the *Lates Detention Table*.
- **Impact of Lateness on Attendance**: Frequent lateness can **significantly affect a pupil's overall attendance**, as lost learning time accumulates over the term. Arriving late not only disrupts the pupil's own education but also impacts the learning environment for others.
- **Communication with the School Regarding Lateness:** If a pupil is late due to a **genuine reason** (e.g. a **family emergency**), parents or carers must **contact the school before 9:00 am** to inform staff of the situation. Please note that **sleeping in is not considered a valid excuse** for lateness. In such cases, a **detention will still be issued** in line with the **Late Detention Table**.
- **Punctuality Monitoring**: If a student is **late to school five or more times** within a term, a **punctuality letter** will be issued to parents/carers.
- **Support Meeting for Continued Lateness**: If lateness persists, parents/carers will be invited to attend a **meeting of concern** to discuss how the school can provide **support for the student and their family** in improving punctuality.
- Any pupil who arrives late to school will receive the following sanction (as per the St Georges behaviour policy)

Lateness detention in the morning (2 demerits)	**Leaves Academy at:**
After 8.25am	3.45pm
After 8.40am	4.00pm
After 9.00am	4.20pm
After 9.20am	4.40pm

After 9.40am	4.50pm

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:
  - Call 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 after three school days, the school will ensure that a home visit is carried out by our PWO)
  - 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.
  - Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
  - Even if there has been communication with the school, if an absence remains unexplained for more than three days, the Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) will be notified. A home visit will then be conducted to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of the pupil.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through progress period written reports

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

- Family holidays are not permitted during term time. Pupils have 13 weeks' school holiday per year and further time off on teacher training days. We kindly ask parents to make routine doctor and dental appointments during these dates in order to avoid unnecessary absence.
- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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, taking into account 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via office/admin. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- **Religious observance** – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- **Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes** – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

- The school or local authority has the authority to issue a penalty notice to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, provided the child is of compulsory school age.
- Fine Amounts and Payment Deadlines:
  - If a penalty notice is issued, **each** parent/carer/guardian must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days that they receive the penalty notice letter.
  - Payments must be made directly to the local authority.
- Repeat Offences:
  - If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within a three-year period, the fine will be £160, with no reduction for early payment.
  - If a third penalty notice is issued, the parent will be referred to the Magistrates' Court and may face prosecution.
- Who Can Issue a Penalty Notice?
  - Headteacher
  - Local Authority Officer
  - Police
- Factors Considered Before Issuing a Penalty Notice:
  - The number of unauthorised absences within a rolling academic year (Included late to school when the morning register has been closed)
  - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as taking holidays during term time without permission.
  - If your child accrues 10 unauthorised sessions (one session equals half a day), recorded as O (unauthorised absence), G (unauthorised holiday) or U (late after the register has closed) attendance codes, you may be liable to receive a penalty notice (fine).
  - Cases where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If payment is not received within 28 days, the Local Authority will instruct its legal team to initiate proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- **Recognition for Excellent Attendance**: The school rewards pupils with **badges & positive praise** in recognition of their outstanding attendance.

- **Celebrating High Attendance**: Pupils with high attendance are acknowledged and celebrated during **morning meeting celebrations**.
- Compulsory Saturday morning integration and catch up sessions for unauthorised absences and weekday school anxiety. Pupils will have to attend these for broken weeks

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

St Georges will:

- **Reporting Absences**: On the first day of a student's absence, parents/carers must inform the school of the reason. If the reason is deemed valid and the student's attendance is **97% or higher**, the absence will be authorised.
- **Initial Attendance Monitoring**: If a student's attendance falls below **97%**, regardless of whether previous absences were authorised or not, parents will be notified of their child's attendance percentage. This will be communicated via a telephone call, informing them that attendance monitoring has begun.
- **First Attendance Concern**: If attendance declines further after the initial phone call, a **green attendance letter** will be sent home.
- **Ongoing Decline in Attendance**: If attendance continues to drop, an **amber attendance letter** will be issued.
- **Stage 1 Attendance Meeting**: Should attendance decline further, a **Stage 1 attendance meeting** will be arranged in school with a **Pastoral Support Worker (PSW)**, the student, and their parents. During this meeting, support strategies will be discussed, and parents will be informed of the next steps should attendance fail to improve. An attendance contract must be signed in this meeting.
- **Serious Attendance Concerns**: If attendance continues to drop, a **red attendance letter** will be sent home.
- **Legal Action & Welfare Involvement**: If unauthorised absences persist after all letters have been initiated and there has been no improvement with attendance then the school and **the local authority pupil welfare service** will initiate legal proceedings. This may result in **penalty notices** being issued to parents, and a **Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO)** will be assigned to support the family.

(Please note that even if a student has not received a green, amber, or red letter, and they accrue any number of unauthorised absences, PWO involvement is always a possibility)

7.2 Analysing attendance

St George's will:

- **Monitor Attendance Trends:** Regularly review attendance and absence data on a daily and weekly basis to identify students or groups who may require additional support. This analysis will guide targeted interventions for both students and their families.
- **Identify and Address Patterns:** Examine both historical and emerging attendance trends to develop and implement effective strategies aimed at improving student attendance and reducing absenteeism.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

St George's will:

- **Share Attendance Reports:** Regularly provide attendance reports to Pastoral Support Workers (PSWs), relevant staff, and school leaders to support discussions with pupils and their families.
- **Use Data to Assess Impact:** Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions through weekly attendance team meetings, making adjustments as needed and using insights to shape future attendance strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses **10% or more** of school, while **severe absence** refers to a pupil missing **50% or more** of school.

St George's will:

- **Analyse Attendance Data**: Identify patterns and trends in **persistent and severe absence** to implement targeted interventions.
- **Maintain Regular Communication**: Engage with parents of pupils who are deemed **vulnerable, persistently absent, or severely absent** by the school and/or local authority to discuss attendance concerns and encourage engagement.
- **Provide Access to Support Services**: Offer a range of interventions to help remove barriers to attendance, including:
  - **Pastoral Support Worker (PSW) linked worker**
  - **Individual Support Plan**
  - **Early help support if needed**
  - **Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) involvement**
  - **Monitoring group letters**
  - **Fast Track attendance support**
  - **Target Group interventions**
  - **Fixed Penalty Notices** (where appropriate)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 12 months. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Relevant links

This policy links to the following policies:

- St Geoge's child protection and safeguarding policy
- St George's behaviour policy

- Blackpool Council Attendance Link