

Attendance

Strategic Framework

This framework is adopted to ensure that academy attendance practice:

- Is compatible with our vision and other key policies, including Safeguarding
- Meets statutory requirements and pays due regard to legislation
- Supports outstanding Behaviour & Safety criteria

Aims

- To raise school standards for our pupils to achieve at least 98% attendance and above.
- Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health, social and emotional development
- Raising attendance and reducing persistent absence
- Eliminating term time leave of absence
- Promoting engagement with education, and ensuring all pupils hit or exceed their achievement targets to enable them to develop life skills and aspirations for their future

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is every child's entitlement in law
- It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure a child attends regularly and on time
- Regular attendance aids intellectual, emotional and social development as well as attainment
- Attending school regularly and punctually safeguards children's welfare whilst they are not in the care of their parents / carers
- All children whose attendance and/or punctuality is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

The Law Relating to School Attendance

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have. This would normally be

through regular attendance at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for young people of compulsory school age and, where necessary, will use legal enforcement.

5. Legal Sanctions

When there is absence from the academy we will do all that we can to ensure every pupil and their family is supported to improve attendance and work closely with the Pupil Welfare Service.

Where these interventions fail to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at the academy and most importantly about returning young people to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and / or be imprisoned for a period of, up to three months.

Alternatives to Section 441 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Regular and punctual attendance at the academy is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their education opportunities.

Legal action in the courts may be used as a strategy to improve attendance when parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance at the academy or other alternative provision. Penalty notices are simply another enforcement option that is now available to the local authority (LA).

To ensure consistent and equitable delivery and the avoidance of duplicate notices being issued, the local delivery of the penalty notice scheme will be managed by the LA.

A penalty notice for non-attendance can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave. St George's Academy does not authorise family holidays during term time other than in exceptional circumstances. A form must be requested from reception and returned to the academy in advance of the proposed holiday. A decision will be given in writing.
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

Each case will be considered individually. A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) academy sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term, and/or fourteen (14) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms, will be required to trigger the process.

Where the LA is of the opinion that a pupil's level of attendance is so low that initiating proceedings in the magistrates' court would be more appropriate, the LA reserves the right not to issue a penalty notice.

In cases of parentally condoned absence, other than notification of intention to take unauthorised leave of absence, the LA will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence (except in respect of unauthorised leave*)
- Issue a penalty notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved
- *When a penalty notice is requested for unauthorised leave of absence, the LA will usually issue a warning letter relating to the period of the planned holiday, but reserve the right to issue penalty notices without a warning letter.

Warning letters may not be issued, for example, in instances where leave of absence is either not requested by parents in advance or requested with insufficient notice for a warning letter to be sent. In such instances, the academy's warning will be deemed sufficient.

A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.

The academy may ask the Council initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment. In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Attendance Routines

Procedure	Detail	
Morning registration	During tutor time (morning meeting): within the first ten minutes	Register is open from 8.25
Afternoon registration	During lesson: within the first five minutes	
Lateness to academy	Pupil signs in at reception desk, or at the late gate. Reception/Attendance marks in as 'L' or 'U'	Detention given if pupil is late in the morning to be made up in late detention that afternoon.
Lateness to lesson	Teacher marks in as L with number of minutes late	Two Ls in one day will equal a 45 min detention the following day.
Lesson by lesson attendance	During all lessons within five minutes	

Absence

Absence from the academy is categorised as 'authorised' and 'unauthorised'. Only the Headteacher may authorise absences.

An absence may be authorised during illness (but not for minor complaints), for religious observance or for any other unavoidable cause.

We ask that where possible parents send the pupils into the academy and an assessment of illness will be made and action taken.

If the Headteacher decides that the reason given for absence is unacceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised. Absences will usually be left unauthorised in the following situations:

- celebrating birthdays
- shopping
- helping out or looking after relatives at home
- family holidays
- where no explanation is given

Parents are asked to contact the academy in advance if they are unsure whether a planned absence would be authorised or not.

Absence Contact Procedures:

The academy has provided an '*attendance line*' for parents to inform the academy of their child's absence on the first day and each day of that absence.

Parents are asked to telephone before 8.25a.m. on the first and each subsequent day of their child's absence.

Parents of pupils absent from registration will be contacted by text message/truancy call before 10.00am on each day of absence if the academy has not been notified of the absence by parents. It is therefore critical that registers are taken at 8-40am.

Parents of pupils who are still missing from the academy and no reason provided at 10am will be contacted by phone.

Parents will be asked to provide a written medical note, copy of prescription, or a dental/hospital card signed by the parent to confirm the reason for absence for appointments during the academy day. This must be signed by the Form Tutor or Pastoral Support Worker. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the academy premises without this. The pupil must sign out from reception and the receptionist will ensure the correct code is entered into the register.

Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year within the attendance section of the pupil file; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action.

If a pupil is persistently late the School Attendance Team/PSW will open a case and work with the family to mitigate against poor attendance.

Vulnerable Children

Children who have special educational needs (SEND), Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP), Children in Need (CIN) or who are persistently absent (PA) will

be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Team/PSW. Any unexplained absence are prioritised. Families are contacted by telephone and/or home visit by the attendance team or PWO. The academy has robust procedures in place to monitor those pupils who are using alternative provision of any sort.

Continuing Absence Procedures

On the second day of absence with no valid reason the attendance team may arrange a home visit. If there continues to be no contact the PWO will be informed to take on the case. A welfare check may be asked for by the PWO.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

10% or more term 1

5% or more term 2/3

The attendance team/PSW will trawl registers daily to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA.) The Attendance team will be responsible for identification of any emerging concerns, and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. A referral is made for external agency support if there are safeguarding concerns or through Triage if the problem appears to be a medical one. All PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an [Action Plan and this will be recorded on the provision map/PSW monitoring list.](#)

Internal Truancy/Safeguarding Procedures

Pupils who are missing from a lesson when they have previously been marked present, must be reported to the Attendance Officer.

The teacher will press 'on call,' on call will communicate with the On Call officer who will notify the Attendance team who will ensure that pupil is placed upon truancy check and is located.

Medical evidence

Medical evidence will be sought in the form of a photocopy of prescribed medication, hospital letter or appointment card will be required for every absence over 5 days and before any further absence is authorised. *Medical evidence will be sought for any illness*

after three broken weeks within a school year. Without medical evidence, absence will be unauthorised (unless agreed by the Head teacher).

Children who cease to attend without prior notification (Children Missing from Education) procedures.

The school follows Blackpool's CME procedures robustly

Non-starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the academy has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the local authority CME team and the PWO for further checks.

Punctuality to the academy

All pupils are required to be in the academy at morning line up by 8.23am at the latest. The academy is open from 8am. Where pupils are late they will be issued with a 45 minute detention, which will take place after the academy day - on that day. Parents are asked to contact the attendance team if there is a genuine reason for lateness to the academy. Persistent poor punctuality will be dealt with by the attendance team/PSW and monitored weekly.

Monitoring attendance / use of data

The academy will ensure attendance data is robust and used intelligently on a planned basis to inform and evidence the impact of interventions to improve attendance. Attendance data will be monitored weekly by the PSW attendance year group link (60 pupils per year) and interventions will be issued. Attendance data will be used alongside other data such as progress and behaviour to inform discussions at all levels of the academy in terms of maximising pupil achievement. The attendance team will provide daily and weekly data reports to SLT.