



STGPS, Camberwell

Pupil Attendance Policy

2022-2023

“Every day counts and Every Child Matters”

This policy applies to all children registered at St George’s. It is available to all parent/carers on our website and by hard copy on request.

At St George's we inspire and nurture all our children to become aspirational life-long learners through an inclusive, ambitious and engaging curriculum.

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of 97%* and above
- Increase parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly.
- Ensure that our policy applies Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

***This target rate is subject to change each academic year**

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into High School more easily.

Parents/Carers should:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling '**unwell**' is not enough.
- Telephone, email or app message on the first morning by 9.00 am and each subsequent morning of absence unless the school attendance officer advises otherwise, informing us of the reason for absence; '**ill/unwell/sick**' is not sufficient.
- Make all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Provide evidence of these appointments and notify the school not less than 24 hours in advance.
- Provide medical evidence after the 5th day of absence where the illness/absence is frequent or prolonged.
- Ensure we have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and emergency contact details.

Reporting an Absence

All absences must be reported to the school office by 9:00 am on each morning of your child's absence. It is not sufficient to inform the class teacher. All year groups including Reception must follow these procedures. Please telephone the school office on **02077034772** and leave a message on the absence line stating the full reason for the absence.

You can also email the school office at office@stgps.org.uk

You can also message the school office using the School Scholar Pack app, the School Spider app and the School Website.

Walk to and from School

A walk-to-school register will be kept for Year 5 and 6 children. Parents must advise the school if their children are travelling to school alone, in writing. We do not permit Year 5 and 6 children to bring younger siblings to school or take them home.

All listed contacts will be phoned if no reason is obtained by 10 am for the absence of a walk-to-school child. If parents/carers fail to advise us on more than 3 occasions of a walk-to-school child being absent, we will remove them from the walk-to-school register and they will need to be escorted to and from school.

The school will:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone call, email, text message and letters as necessary.
- Follow up unexplained absences of children on the walk to School Register by telephone on the first day of absence no later than 10.00am.
- Telephone all listed contacts on a pupil's records if the number one contact is unobtainable.
- If a satisfactory reason cannot be obtained for a 'walk to school' child by 11am the school will notify the police.
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the school website.
- Publish each child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report (Reception – Y6).
- Inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality. Children with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees.
- We will meet termly with the Local Authority Family Help Manager to discuss attendance that is a cause for concern.

When attendance becomes a concern, the school will:

- In the first instance we will send 'Amber Warning Attendance Letters' via email to all pupils whose attendance drops below 95%. If attendance does not improve and then falls below 90% we will send, via email, 'Red Warning Attendance Letters.' Please see attached examples
- If the attendance does not improve then we will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer to highlight the child's attendance concerns.

Persistent Absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement particularly at GCSE.

Persistent absence is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In some cases, parents might be invited to agree a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement plan with the school as a way of managing improvement.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill and the school has been notified.

Other authorised absences such as for a family bereavement or for religious observance are classed as exceptional leave and a form must be completed for the absence to be authorised.*

Where a family has suffered bereavement within the extended family, 2 days will be authorised leave and any subsequent days will be recorded as unauthorised, unless an arrangement has been made with the school.

In addition to the exceptional leave form, the school will require copies of documentation to support your application of exceptional leave e.g. copies of flight tickets, medical letters etc.

**If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office via email and provide evidence for the exceptional absence*

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- absence following or prior a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

SEN and Disadvantaged children

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate
- Recognise that some pupils are not ‘available for learning’ and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school.

Exceptional Leave – Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office via email and provide evidence for the exceptional absence

PLEASE NOTE THAT ABSENCE TAKEN WHICH HAS NOT BEEN AUTHORISED COULD BE LIABLE FOR A FIXED PENALTY FINE BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND THAT EXTENDED ABSENCES WITHOUT PERMISSION MAY PUT YOUR CHILD’S PLACE AT ST. GEORGE’S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AT RISK.

Children Missing Education

In accordance with the DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidelines 2016: Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register after making 'reasonable enquiries', to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Monitoring attendance is an essential part of safeguarding children in Southwark. In accordance with the Child Protection Policy 2017, we shall notify Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise school-work for the rest of the day.

School Times

Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

- 8.45 am – 3.15 pm

Start arrangements

- All classes are invited into class for soft start from 8.40am.
- The school day starts at 8.45am.

The gates to the playground will be open at 8.30am. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gates by 8.50am at the latest. The register will be taken promptly at 8.45am and the school day will start on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view that there are no late children, only late parents.

Late Arrivals

From 8.45am the pedestrian gates will be staffed by a member of Senior Leadership – any pupil who is late will be sent to the school office.

Children that are not in class on time for the register will be marked late. (L code)

All gates will be closed at 8.55am and registers taken at 9am.

Late arrival (**30 minutes or more**) after registration closes at 9am, without an acceptable reason will be marked as '**unauthorised absence**'. (U code) The minutes accumulated for lateness **will be** reflected in

the children's absence levels. Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality, **so if you believe that you will be late bringing your child to school for any reason please contact the school office.**

Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing/distressing for the child.

All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Families of children who receive more than 5 late marks per half term will receive an email. Persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer. A meeting may also be arranged with the relevant Key Stage Deputy Head teacher.

Collection from School

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety i.e. the local police station. We will share concerns with other agencies including the Southwark Early Intervention Team (formally Social Services).

If you are running late or unavoidably obtained, please keep the school office informed.

Pick Up Arrangements

Please inform the school office at the start of the school day if there are any changes to your regular pick up arrangements, this can be done verbally, written directly into your child's contact book, via email or text.

Please only contact the school office if your arrangements have been changed in an emergency. This minimises the disruption caused to the children's learning as all new arrangements have to be telephoned through to the class.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than to go to Secondary School) parents are asked to: Complete a Leavers Form available by request via email from the school office. This asks for comprehensive information about new school details, address details and a leaving date.

When pupils leave and we do not have information about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education.' This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Southwark Early Intervention Team, the Police and other services to try and locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DFE (Department for Education) and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

Regular Attendance

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school. (Supreme Court Ruling April 2017)

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent;

(Registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence." A pupil's Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the parent.

Part-Time Attendance

St. George's CE Primary School does not promote part-time attendance unless prescribed by an ECHP.

"Every day counts and Every Child Matters!"

- **Article 28 (right to education)**
- **Every child has the right to an education.**

Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.



Absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at () recent high levels of absence from school.

His/Her current attendance has fallen to (%). Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on his/her academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support () education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him/her to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I will continue to monitor () absence and if it does not improve you will be called in to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the next steps and how we can support you and () further.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer



St. George's Church of England
Primary School

Coleman Road
Camberwell SE5 7TF
Telephone: 0207 703 4772
Email: office@stgps.org.uk
www.stgeorgesprimary.school

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Rojas

Poor Attendance

RE:

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils, we monitor attendance/punctuality with the Educational Welfare Office (Southwark) on a regular basis and identify any pupil whose attendance/punctuality causes concern, as this has a huge impact on their education. We are therefore writing to you due to your child's very low level of attendance.

Currently () attendance percentage for the year so far is ().

The Headteacher, (), would like to discuss this matter with you at the appointment below where a plan will be agreed.

Date:

Time:

Venue:

Failure to attend the meeting or contact us will be considered as you failing to work with us to improve your child's attendance/punctuality and you will be at risk of being referred to the Southwark Early Help Service.

I have a duty to advise you that it is a legal requirement under the Education Act 1996, for you to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. The Education Authority can take legal action against you and if found guilty, could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per parent for each child and /or 3 months imprisonment. Parents who are prosecuted under this Section of the law commit a criminal offence and therefore would have a criminal record.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer