



Let it be known that all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes, the model for its children, the inspiration for its staff.

We aim to be a Christian community and witnesses to Christ, where all can experience and grow in Christian love, through God's word and the gifts of His

School Attendance Policy

Introduction:

St George's is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

This policy sets out how, together, we will ensure that your child is able to attend school regularly.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence also disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

There is a strong correlation between the amount of absence from school and the attainment of pupils. Every lesson in school matters and children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well at school. Regular absence can limit your child's future opportunities and set up bad habits for work and life.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence'. - Education Act 1996

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils, and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward excellent attendance [e.g. certificates/prizes etc]

Understanding Types of Absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may need to be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons, such as difficulties within the school environment. Any problems the child may be experiencing at school are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. It is important that you contact the school and make them aware of any problems your child may be experiencing as soon as possible. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Weather

In the event of extreme weather, heavy snowfall/severe ice etc, parents will be informed by text that the school will either be closed or open. If the school is open, but the travelling conditions are difficult, parents will be told that they should bring their child to school if they feel they can get here and home safely. We anticipate that there will be a staggered arrival of children, and no late marks will be given that day. If the school is closed, or the parents have made the decision that it is too dangerous to travel to school, the absence will be authorised. Parents of any children who have not arrived in school by breaktime will be contacted. If, however, the conditions improve during the morning and travelling is no longer an issue, the children are expected to come into school for the remainder of the morning or afternoon session. In the event that a pupil does not come in, this absence may be treated as UNAUTHORISED due to parents/carers keeping the child off unnecessarily. A reminder text will be sent to all parents of children who are absent due to the weather conditions at lunchtime.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately and invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss support strategies to help improve your child's attendance.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and by the Local Authority. Where appropriate your child may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent **you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence. You must do this even if you have already telephoned us. If we do not get an explanation for your child's absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

* where a child's level of absence is causing concern, the school reserves the right to request some form of medical proof that the child was unfit to attend in order to authorise their absence.

If your child is absent, **we will:**

- Telephone / text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you

If your child's level of absence is causing concern, **we will:**

- Send a letter to you highlighting the absence %
- Monitor the following half term to see if there is an improvement
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of staff to discuss support strategies to help improve your child's attendance

If your child's level of absence is causing concern, **we may:**

- Invite you to complete a Common Assessment Framework form, in order to ensure that any support your child may need from other agencies to help improve their attendance can be put in place
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 85%

Telephone Numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents for lots of reasons, including to discuss absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Local Authority Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer to the Local Authority Attendance Officer. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if this is unsuccessful, and if unauthorised absence persists, this Officer can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority School Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent from the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the local authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the morning or afternoon session, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. The office holds a 'late register' which is monitored by the Head Teacher. If your child enters via the office they are automatically marked late.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Morning registers are marked at **8:55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

Afternoon registers are marked at **1.05pm** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

Once the school register has been closed, in accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after this time they will receive a mark that shows them as being on site, but this will not count as a present mark. This will result in your child having an unauthorised absence for this session. This may mean you could face a Fixed Penalty Notice or some other legal sanction if the problem persists.

If you regularly find you have problems getting your child to school on time you may be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem. You may however approach the school at any time if you are experiencing problems with your child's punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you make by taking a holiday in term time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. The governing body at St George's have decided that requests for occasional days off and holidays during term time will not be authorised. The Head Teacher will continue to be able to authorise absence in extreme circumstances but these will be for compassionate reasons only (e.g. bereavement or serious family illness etc.)

Please continue to take very seriously the decision to remove your child from school during term time (even for a couple of days) as there is a clear link between high attendance and good academic progress.

The school's policy is that extra homework is not given unless absence is due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances. With pressure on time to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum it may not be possible to repeat some elements of the attainment targets covered during your child's absence.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. The whole school initiative is to encourage the children to work towards being awarded a bronze, silver and gold award for attendance. Bronze is awarded for one full term, silver is for two full terms and gold is for three full terms. The children are named in the newsletter celebrating their award for that term.

The staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs A. Delgado ~ Head Teacher.

Mrs J Russell ~ Administrative assistant responsible for attendance.

Mrs C. Noblet ~ Special Educational Needs Leader

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

A copy of this policy is available on request from the School Office.

It was presented to the Curriculum Committee on 17th March 2016

It was agreed by the Governing Body on 23rd March 2016

Review date March 2019

APPENDIX 1

St. Georges Catholic Primary School

Application for Leave of Absence from School During Term Time

Dear Parents,

Please find overleaf an application form for leave of absence from school during term time for children.

The governing body at St Georges have decided that requests for occasional days off and holidays during term time will no longer be authorised. The Head Teacher will continue to be able to authorise absence in extreme circumstances but these will be for compassionate reasons only.

(e.g. bereavement or serious family illness etc.)

Please continue to take very seriously the decision to remove your child from school during term time (even for a couple of days) as there is a clear link between high attendance and good academic progress.

This form must continue to be used if you intend to take your child out of school at any time.

The school's policy is that extra homework is not given unless absence is due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances. I would also point out, that with pressure on time to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum it may not be possible to repeat some elements of the attainment targets covered during your child's absence.

Yours sincerely,

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School attendance - what does the law say?

Parents (carers) are responsible for ensuring their children receive a suitable education. This includes parents making sure their children attend school on time, suitably dressed and in a fit state to learn.

The law enables schools to authorise absence for the following:

- Acceptable medical reasons or an unavoidable cause.
- Religious observance.
- Entitled transport not provided

In addition, schools may authorise absence in exceptional circumstances at their discretion.

St. Georges Catholic Primary School

Absence Application

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____ Year: _____ Date: _____

I Parent/Guardian of the above hereby apply for leave of absence from school during term time on behalf of the said child/ren from:

..... to (inclusive)

Number of days of absence this will incur (10 days max. in any one year)

The reason for the absence:

Is this absence unavoidable?

Has there been any previous absence at St. Georges

Is your child making good progress?

I have read and understood the reverse notes. Parent/guardian signature.....

(OFFICE USE ONLY)

Absence to date:

S.E.N.C.O. (if applicable)

Authorised

Class teacher Comments:

Dear Parent,

I refer to your application for authorised absence during school term for your child/ren.

.....
from to

Absence is authorised	
<u>Absence is not authorised for the following reason (s):</u>	
The governing body have decided that occasional days off and holidays during term time will no longer be authorised.	
Child's progress requires continued attendance	
Other:	

Mrs A. Delgado (Head Teacher)