



St Edward's School

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Attendance Policy

**Reviewed by the Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Committee
On: 25th November 2021**

**Ratified at the St Edward's FGB
On: 9th December 2021**

Next review date: Autumn 2022

SLT are responsible for oversight of this policy's implementation

Mission Statement

This policy covers St Edward's approach to promoting good attendance within school. Good attendance enables young people to make the most of their education and helps to prepare them for life outside of school.

Good attendance within the school links closely with our mission statement:

MAY WE BE ONE

In purpose – educating for life in all its fullness

In faith – encountering God who lives among us, calling us to unity

In dignity – nurturing confidence and maturity

In community – striving together for justice, love and peace.

In particular the attendance policy at St Edwards will focus on the “in purpose” and “in faith” parts of the mission statement.

At the heart of this attendance policy within the school is the desire for all students to be educated for life in all its fullness. Being present in school and part of the school community is vital to our aim of “May we be one” and means that students will be able to encounter God who lives among us, through being in school each day. Good attendance in school is important to academic success but also just as importantly is significant in preparing young people for life beyond school and can enable them to form positive lifelong habits and practices. It is in this way that this attendance policy will support the education of students for life in all of its fullness and helping students to encounter God on a daily basis.

Aims

At St Edward's School we recognise that regular school attendance is crucial if students are to reach their potential. It impacts upon levels of attainment, relationships, with peers, future opportunities and enjoyment of school. That is why St Edward's is committed to ensuring that every child has the right to access the education to which they are entitled to and adopting the Department for Education (DFE) target of a minimum of **96%** attendance.

Good attendance is important because

- Research and statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 96%
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and high education, employment or training.

St Edward's school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age to attend regularly.
- Supporting the work of any relevant service to support improved attendance.
- Use legal means, if necessary, to ensure students attend school regularly.
- To maintain or improve the punctuality of our students.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their Young People of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their Young Person's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a Young Person of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The school has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their student attends school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

St Edward's Responsibilities

In accordance to DfE amended guidance 2016, St Edward's will;

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every student has access to full time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Uphold their legal duty to identify students who are failing to attend regularly [below 90%] and to inform the Local Education Authority. 90% is deemed to be the threshold for persistent absence.
- Encourage and educate parents and carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure that all students are punctual to their lessons.
- Have a member of the senior leadership team oversee, direct, coordinate the school's work to improve attendance and ensure the schools policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents and carers the need and reasons for the child's absence and will encourage them to keep

absences to a minimum. A letter or explanation from a student's home does not mean the absence will be authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

- Complete a CME (Child Missing Education) form after any prolonged absence from school and refer to the local authority.
- Support students through additional provision when attendance issues are hindering inclusion.

Responsibility of Tutors

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Follow up unexplained absences and refer onto the Director of Learning when warranted.
- To discuss attendance and absence with students and parents as directed by a Director of Learning, Attendance Officer or Assistant Headteacher.

Responsibility of the Director of Learning

- Liaise with Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Be aware of the attendance of their year groups, including a specific focus on vulnerable students. Coordinate/and/assist in support and intervention strategies as necessary.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence and monitor any safeguarding issues.
- To discuss attendance and absence with students and parents as directed by the Attendance Officer or Assistant Headteacher.

Responsibility of Attendance Officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level, and tracks this at a regular basis.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Attendance and Alternative Provision Manager and/or the Assistant Headteacher.
- Monitors day to day attendance in the school including communication from home about absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Attendance and Alternative Provision Manger and/or the Assistant Headteacher, when to contact the Local Authority who may issue a fixed-penalty notice

Responsibility of Attendance and Alternative Provision Manager:

- Promote high levels of attendance across all students
- To meet with parents and students where necessary to discuss how attendance can be improved.
- Liaise with external agencies to safeguard students with attendance concerns.
- To advise the Assistant Headteacher / Headteacher when to contact the Local Authority who may issue a fixed-penalty notice.
- Monitor attendance for all year groups and communicate these figures with the Directors of Learning, Assistant Headteacher and where necessary the Headteacher. This will also include figures such as PA rates, yearly attendance, punctuality and individual student attendance.
- Support all students in school with their attendance, particularly the most vulnerable groups including those with mental health diagnoses, long term absentees due to illness, Pupil Premium students, Looked After Children, those on Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) etc.

Responsibility of Assistant Headteacher

- Promote high levels of attendance across all students
- To ensure that this policy and the attendance strategy are implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Headteacher and governors.

Responsibility of Headteacher

- The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and in turn, the Local Authority may issue a fine if more than 5 school days are taken .

Responsibility of students.

- Attend everyday unless they are too ill to attend or have an authorised absence
- Arrive at school and lessons on time
- Go to all registrations and lessons
- Take responsibility for registering at Reception or the Student Office if they are late or are leaving school site during school hours.
- Refrain from leaving the school site for any reason without permission from an appropriate member of staff.
- Provide evidence following absence or appointments.

Responsibility of Parents and Carers

Ensuring your child's attendance at school is a parents and carers legal responsibility (section 44 1996 Education Act). Therefore parents and carers are expected to;

- See themselves and the school in partnership in the education of their child with respect to their attendance
- Understand they have the greatest influence in this area and need to be aware of this and of their responsibilities
- Ensure the message of how good attendance leads to good achievement and good life opportunities and support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year for their child.
- Inform school on first day of absence
- Make sure absence is accounted for by contacting the student absence line or email absence address and following up with a letter to tutor on return to school (01202 740950 then select appropriate option for the year group student is in or email absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk).
- Discuss with the Director of Learning any planned absences well in advance
- Avoid taking students out of school for non-emergency medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. Requests must be made in writing and sent to the Headteacher.
- To attend any meetings that the school has arranged towards attendance, as this will ensure a working partnership between school and home for the student.
- Keep contact details up to date with the school.

Procedures for Recording Attendance

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

St Edward's procedures for adhering to these requirements is as follows:

Registration & Lateness

- The school day starts at 8.45am and students are expected to be in tutor time at this time. Tutor time is from 8.45am until 9.10am. This will be the first session that the attendance register will be taken. The second session will be at the start of period 4.
- Staff will only mark students present if they have physically seen them.
- If a student arrives between 8.45am and 9.15pm the attendance will be recorded as L (before registers close).
- If a student arrives after 9.15am they will be recorded as U (late after registers close).
- If a student arrives late to period 4 the attendance will be registered as L for that session (before registers close).
- Arrival after the close of registers will be marked as unauthorised absence code U in line with DFE guidance. This mark shows them as on site, but legally recorded as an absence.
- All lateness is recorded daily, this information will be required by courts should prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- If a student is late due to a Medical appointment then they will receive an authorised absence code M.

Attendance codes

St Edward's will record a student's attendance using one of the approved DFE codes as set out in DFE guidance 2016. See appendix 1.

Absence from School

Authorised absence

Only St Edward's is able to authorise absence, neither the Local Authority or parents and carers have the power to do so. Absence will only be authorised after careful consideration in line with the Education [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulations 2016 – the following reasons are for treating a student's absence as authorised:

- Illness that deems a child 'unfit' for school.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher (see Appendix 2)

Reporting Student Absence

A child not attending school will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Therefore the following procedure must be followed by parents and carers and the school.

- **On the first day of absence** the parents and carers must inform the school by contacting the school's students absence line (01202 740950 then select appropriate option for the year group

student is in or email absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk). This information will be used to update the registers

- Parents and carers must provide a note to the tutor explaining reason for absence.
- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

In response to absence the school actions will include;

- Telephone or text parents and carers on the first day of absence if we haven't heard from them via the school's student absence line or absence email.
- Invite you in for a discussion with the Tutor or Director of Learning about the situation if absence persists or is regularly repeated.
- If a student has been absent and no contact has been able to be made by the **third day of absence** the school will initiate the Poole Borough's Child Missing in Education (CME) procedure.
- If a student has been absent for 10 consecutive days without explanation then it has a legal duty to report it to Child Social Services.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Persistent Absence Procedure

If a student absence drops below 90% for whatever reason (authorised or non authorised) they are defined as persistently absent. If a student falls into this category parents and carers may be invited in to discuss an action plan to support the student.

Leave of Absence from Learning

Parents and carers do not have a right to take students on a family holiday during term time. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Each request will be dealt with individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. Each decision made will not set a precedent for future decisions. All requests for leave of absence from learning due to holiday must be put in writing to the Headteacher.

Prolonged absence due to illness

- Any absence of two weeks or more or repeated illness will need to be supported by a Medical Certificate.

- Parents and carers will be contacted to discuss provision of education after a minimum period of 10 days as the Local Authority has to ensure that no student is without access to education for more than 15 working days.
- The school has a responsibility to ensure that the student's education continues as fully as possible. Work will be provided if requested, wherever possible for an absence over 5 days.
- Liaison will be with parents and carers, and where appropriate School Attendance Worker, Pastoral Manager, School Nurse and/or GP

Unauthorised absence

- ◆ Unauthorised absence is any absence that is not authorised by the school, including unauthorised holidays.
- ◆ Unauthorised absence will be followed up with parents and carers and any problems identified and addressed.
- ◆ When necessary the school will refer unauthorised absences to the Local Education Authority which could result in legal action being taken.

Legal sanctions

The Local Authority can fine both parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 each within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Procedures for Preventing Persistent Absence

St Edward's implements an escalating 5 stage system to support parents and carers and students to maintain and improve attendance. In response to on-going monitoring by tutors and Directors of Learning as well as half termly audits and reviews by the School's Attendance Worker and Assistant Headteachers the following stages are put in place;

Stage 1

- **100%--96%**
- Attendance is above target and will be monitored on the whole school tracking system to ensure that it remains above target.

Stage 2

- **93 - 96%**
- Attendance monitored by tutor and will discuss the issue with the student.
- Email or phone call home if necessary

Stage 3

- **90 - 93%**
- LBS made aware and will discuss with the student.
- Follow up phone call if necessary.
- Email sent home to advise of low attendance.

Stage 4

- **85 - 90%**
- DOL made aware – discussion with student. Follow up phone call.
- Letter sent home advising that student is now “persistently absent”
- Medical evidence maybe required for absence.
- Parental meeting in school if required.

Stage 5

- **85% or below**
- Student monitored by the Attendance and Alternative Provision Manager
- Parental meeting in school may be necessary
- Letter advising serious concern over attendance.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Policy

Implementation and consistent following of procedures is the responsibility of all teachers.

Monitoring of daily attendance will be done by the attendance officer with tutors, Directors of Learning, the Attendance and Alternative Provision Manager and Senior Leadership Team.

Monitoring and review of the policy's effectiveness should take place on an annual basis. This is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher responsible for student attendance.

Appendix 1 : Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed (after 0845 but before 0915)
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Exceptional circumstances that warrant an authorised leave of absence
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
H	Holiday authorised by the school	A leave of absence granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion
G	Holiday not authorised by the school	If the Headteacher does not authorise a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, the absence is unauthorised.
I	Illness	
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical or dental appointment	Medical or dental appointments are an authorised absence. However parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school wherever possible
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R	Religious Observance	

T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence	
U	Unauthorised Absence	Arrival in school after 0915 without satisfactory reason
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
<p>For the school year 2020-2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is “not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (Covid-19).” This code is used to record sessions where the pupil’s travel to or presence at school would conflict with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of Covid-19 from Public Health or • Any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus 		
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to Covid-19	This code is not counted as an absence in the school census.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause or a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending the school (i.e. snow).

Absence codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their GCSEs
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Administrative codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Requests for Leave of Absence in Term Time.

If students are to reach their potential they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, uninterrupted school attendance is a key factor in helping students reach their potential. Every effort should always be made to avoid disruption to a student's education.

Following amendments to the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Head Teachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Head Teacher.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time the Head Teacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the Request for Leave of Absence form. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

Parents/Carers will be notified of the Head Teacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then parents/carers will be informed of this and made aware that the Local Authority may be asked to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.