

# St. George's CE Academy



'Rivers of living water'

Ambition, Courage & Kindness

## Attendance Policy

Date Ratified at Governors: May 2022

Review date: May 2024

## **Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

## **Philosophy**

At St George's CE Academy, we promote a culture in which children enjoy coming to school, and do not want to miss out. We are committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 97% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Shropshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **Objectives**

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to minimise the occurrence of poor attendance and absenteeism
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

## **Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will:

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Work with all members of the school community and Local Authority in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.

Attendance will be an important feature of the school's development. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

### **The Registration System**

The School will use a computerised system (SIMS) for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes will be used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

In the event of computer failure paper registers will be kept. Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session (8:55am) and the beginning of the afternoon session.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded in the correct code. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

### **Lateness**

Morning registration will be taken at 8.55am. The registers will remain open until 9.20am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

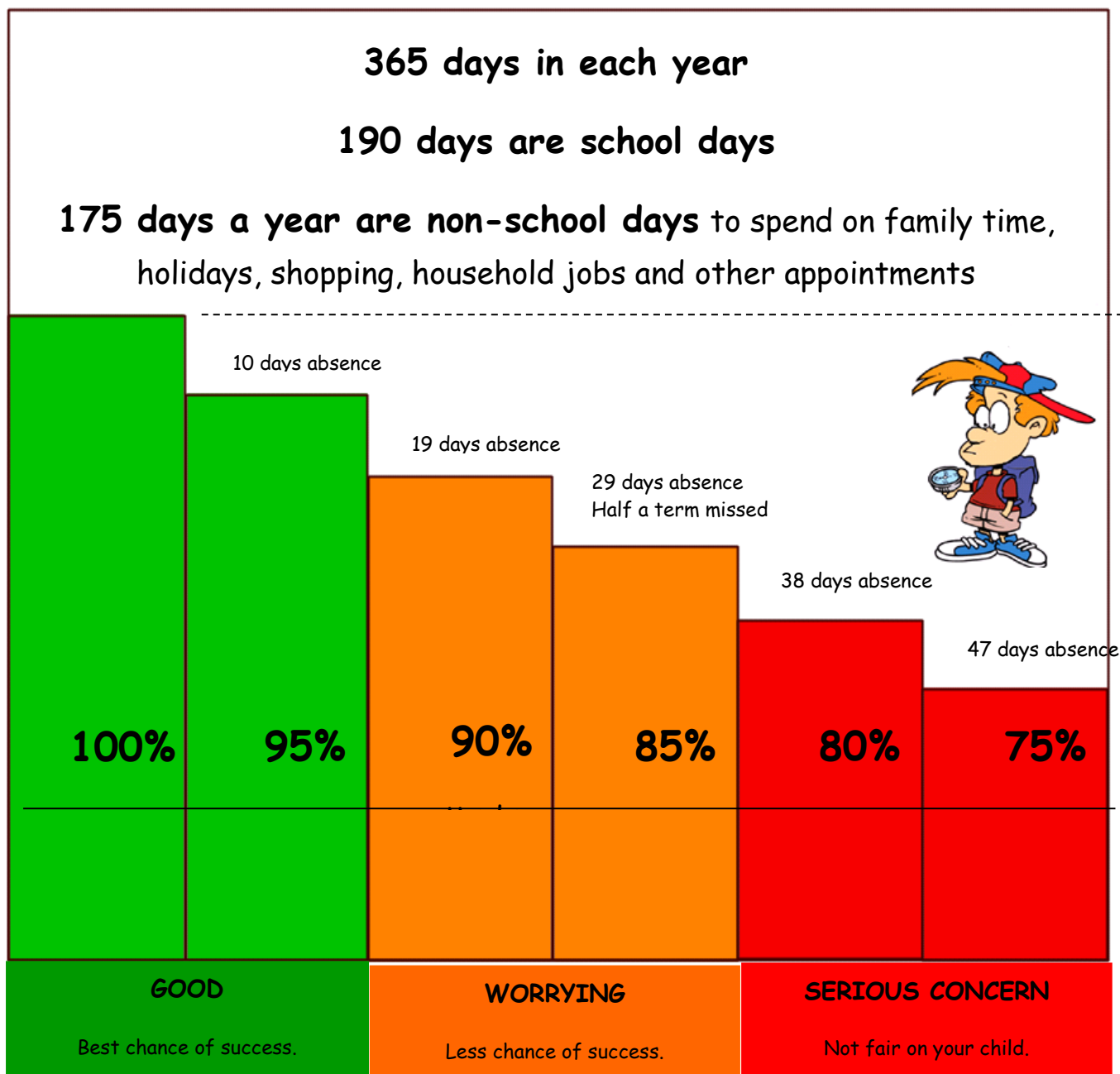
Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close (L). Pupils who arrive after registration closes will be coded as late after the register closes (U), an unauthorised absence.

### **Absence**

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents must contact the school on each day of absence by 9.30am. If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration the office is informed and our office staff will contact the parent/carer as a matter of concern.

## IMPACT OF LOW ATTENDANCE

Days off school add up to lost learning. Did you know that an attendance of 85% each year means that 1 whole year of primary education is missed?



### Monitoring

In instances where a child's attendance either falls below an acceptable level or shows a regular pattern of absence or poor punctuality, parents will be informed of the school's concerns. If attendance remains poor, we will work with parents and pupils to improve attendance

Where pupils have a high level of absence due to illness the school may request medical evidence in order to authorise absences in line with DFE guidance

Where there is unauthorised absence the school may refer to Shropshire Local Authority who may proceed with legal action under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1(A)).

## **A Welcome Back**

Our School promotes positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

Each week attendance records are checked. Parents will be contacted asking for a reason for any unexplained absences. If no reasonable explanation is provided the absence will remain as unauthorised.

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school (The Education Act 1996, Section 444). The school places great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement as well as social and emotional benefits. School holiday dates are published in advance. Within the Government guidance, The Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 headteachers may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. These amendments came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

**Therefore, the school is not permitted to authorise any leave in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher decides what constitutes exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 38 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 14 weeks.**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on:

- procedures for applying for leave during term time;
- the consequences of taking unauthorised leave in term time

## **PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING**

- Applications for leave during term time should be made in writing to the Head teacher at least 6 weeks in advance of the planned leave
- Any reasons that may constitute exceptional circumstances must be clearly stated within the leave request.
- The Head teacher will decide whether the leave during term time can be authorised and will write to the parent to inform them of the outcome

## **CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING UNAUTHORISED LEAVE DURING TERM TIME**

Taking leave during term time without authorisation will have an impact on a child's learning. Parents who choose to take unauthorised leave during term time must accept that this will have an adverse effect on their child's educational achievement.

In cases of unauthorised leave the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices who will issue parents with a fixed penalty notice. This is a fine per parent per child of £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. The fixed penalty fine is collected and kept by the Local Authority, not the school.

The Local Authority may address repeat offenses of unauthorised leave through a court prosecution.

### **Promoting attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

A weekly newsletter keeps parents in touch with school events and helps to foster the sense of a community.

Attendance awards are given to children as well as our class attendance cup. We work with an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to regularly monitor and review absences.

### **Attendance Target**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by a governor and the school business manager.

Our schools target is 97%