



St Edward's
Church of England
Academy

Attendance Policy

Approved by Trustees:
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Statutory Policy:

RECOGNISE • ENCOURAGE • STRIVE • PREPARE • EMPATHISE • CHRISTIAN • TEAMWORK

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THE VISION FOR EDUCATION WITHIN A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

There are fundamental reasons, rooted in the Bible, which have motivated centuries of Christian involvement in schooling in this country and around the world. The God of all creation is concerned with everything related to education.

There is a fresh articulation of the Church of England's vision for education as we meet the challenges and take the opportunities offered by the present situation. The vision is not simply for Church schools but, recognising the Church's involvement in education over many centuries, the Church of England seeks to promote educational excellence everywhere, for everyone. In Church schools like St Edward's Church of England Academy, the deeply Christian foundation for this vision will be seen explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum, and also in the authentically Christian worship and ethos. The Church's vision for education can be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that inspires what the school is and does.

The vision is deeply Christian with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. This vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, within a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate our vision for education:

- Wisdom
- Hope
- Community
- Dignity

The vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole community and its environment, whether national, regional or local. It is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society and democracy, together with a healthily plural educational system.

ST EDWARD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY VISION, ETHOS AND VALUES

The Vision for Education at our Academy

At St Edward's Church of England Academy, we are commissioned to celebrate and support the talents and potential of all in our community (Matthew 28: 18-12). In our Academy, we are all journeying together in order to learn through faith, grow through hope and achieve through love (Corinthians 13:13), allowing all to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

We are an avowedly inclusive community where all are welcomed, supported and celebrated for all they are and for all they do. Our Academy is a place of and a space for flourishing and fulfilment because here...

...we are 10:10 people.

The ethos and values of St Edward's Church of England Academy are based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and underpin everything that we are and everything that we do, which is encompassed in the word 'RESPECT'.

Each letter links to the Academy motto – *Learn for Life*.

'Learn for Life'

- Recognise and Encourage everyone's potential, individual skills and talents
- Strive to be the best we can be
- Prepare for the challenges of life
- Empathise – promoting the values of respect, kindness, compassion, fairness, forgiveness, love, honesty and trust
- Christian – a community where we learn from the teachings of Jesus so that we can contribute to the family of St Edward's and beyond
- Teamwork – an environment where we work together so we can all achieve our potential

Attendance Policy

Aim

The policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in the Academy and to outline its commitment to attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Objective

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued throughout the school day
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Policy development and review

The policy has been developed through a review which involved all members of the Academy community- pupils, parents/carers, trustees and Academy staff. It has been created to comply with The Children's Act 1989, The Education and Inspection Act 2006, The Equality Act 2010. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy and the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Policy.

All stake holders are crucial in the ongoing development and review of this policy, e.g. questionnaires at parents' evenings / parent forums, as well as pupil, staff and trustees' meetings/questionnaires.

Do you realise that:

90% attendance = 19 days off school
85% attendance = 29 days off school (a whole half term!!)
80% attendance = 38 days off school
70% attendance = 57 days off school (a whole term!!)

Evaluation Procedures

In order to assess the effectiveness of this Policy, the following standards will be used as a means of measuring performance.

- Variations in attendance and punctuality over a given period; Individual incident reports, within given periods for different age groups.
- Attendance is a standing agenda item at meetings where reports and analysis are discussed with Trustees

What is expected of the Academy:

- Create a positive ethos that pupils want to be part of
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- Give high priority to punctuality and attendance
- Develop procedures that enable the Academy to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent/carer condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school with the emphasis on support and promoting positive attitudes
- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees
- Develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of a stimulating curriculum
- Where a pupil's attendance and / or punctuality continues to cause concern to report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Please refer to Appendices 1 for the Academy procedures for recording and monitoring attendance.

What is expected of parents/carers:

- Parents/carers should make sure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the correct equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.
- A reason should be offered for lateness. School gates open at 8.35am and the start of the day, registration is 8.45am. If your child arrives to school after 8.45am but before 9am they will receive a late mark. If your child arrives after 9am it is an unauthorised absence.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements
- To keep requests for their child to be absent from the Academy to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence. Please report your child's absence by 8.30am on the first morning of each absence either by leaving a message on the pupil absence line or using the contact us page on our website. If no reason is provided the absence will be unauthorised on the attendance register.
- To continue to keep the Academy informed of their child's absence, even after the first day, and preferably to explain the absence in writing
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances, owing to Government legislation
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATs and other exams
- To work closely with the Academy and EWO to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence.
- To ensure their child attends school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

What is expected of pupils:

- Respect others and themselves
- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel they have concerns or issues which may make them reluctant to attend the Academy or to be punctual
- Encourage friendship and build a sense of community
- Be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What are authorised or unauthorised absences?

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily such as missing school due to a birthday, shopping trip, looking after siblings etc.
- Going on holiday during school time where permission has not been granted by the school due to **exceptional circumstances**.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark – after registration has closed

What if my child has low attendance?

Parents/Carers may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act, Section 444. It aims to ensure that parents/carers carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children. If a child is in the care of foster carers or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned.

EWOs can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute the parents/carers or seek an Educational Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months’ imprisonment. For further information regarding Penalty Notices, please refer to the Staffordshire County Council website.

Alternatively, parents/carers or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Only the Academy can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Flowchart – Request of Leave of Absence During Term Time

<p>1.Parent / carer requests a leave of absence at least one month before the start date of the absence, using the Academy leave of absence request form (see school website)</p> <p>2.The Academy will decide regarding the application (we may also liaise with other schools if there are children in the family at another school), and will inform parent / carer via letter as to whether the request has been agreed</p>			
Agreed		Declined	
<p>-Leave of absence is authorised due exceptional circumstances are accepted</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>		<p>-Leave of absence is denied as circumstances are deemed not to be exceptional</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	
<p>-The Academy will inform parent / carer in writing that the request has been agreed</p>		<p>-The Academy will inform parent / carer in writing that the request has been denied and that if the absence occurs it will be unauthorised</p> <p>-If a parent / carer wishes to appeal against the decision then they should contact the Academy to discuss further</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	
<p>Pupil returns to school on the date agreed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Attendance is monitored</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Attendance declines</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Refer to Attendance Policy</p>		<p>Unauthorised absence occurs.</p> <p>Does the absence meet criteria for Penalty Notice?</p>	
<p>Pupil does not return to school on the date agreed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Absence in unauthorised</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Safe & Well checks completed by House Leaders</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Attendance is monitored</p>		No	Yes
		<p>Absence is unauthorised</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Attendance is monitored</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Attendance declines</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Refer to Attendance Policy</p>	<p>Academy to inform Parent / Carer that the matter has been referred to the EWO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Academy to inform the EWO and complete a Penalty Notice Request</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>EWO responds to the request within 10 school days and outlines to the Academy the next steps</p>

Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers requesting leave of absence in Term Time

1. Please note that agreeing to any request for leave during term time is usually **NOT AGREED**. A pupil who takes a **2 weeks'** family holiday in term time (10 school days) will only be able to achieve an attendance of **94.7%**. This is assuming the pupil has no illness or medical appointments for the rest of the school year and automatically **prevents the pupil from achieving the Academy target**. Any pupil who has 10 or more unauthorised absences including unauthorised absences is likely to be subject to a fine from the Local Authority who are legally obliged to examine our registers for pupils falling into this category. Regular meetings between the House Leader and the EWO will take place in the Academy.
2. Parents/Carers who want the Academy to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and complete a leave of absence form (see school website). This form should be sent to the Academy in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. (In normal circumstances, **at least one month** prior to the start date of the request for leave of absence). Parents and carers are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. The Academy will not authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
3. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents/carers face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure that children receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents/carers therefore, need to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the Academy will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent/carer made the request in advance
 - pupils on examination courses or due to take SATs will **not** normally be granted leave of absence
6. Where parents/carers have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the Academy decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence, then this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents/carers still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent/carer* per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents/carers who ignore the law.
10. Generally, the DfE states that parents/carers include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.
11. Should the parent/carer decide to appeal against the decision made by the Academy then they may have the right to appeal.

Attendance & Punctuality

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the target reports, written yearly reports and recorded half-termly in the homework diaries
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time. They will have the support of staff, particularly the House Tutor and House Leader.

Those pupils who have a very good attendance record (in the green group) will be rewarded with a commendation each term. To encourage good attendance a pupil will receive 3 respect points, from their House tutor, for each full week they attend school, without any late marks. There will be raffle draws each half term for pupils who have improved their attendance. An attendance board is displayed in reception showing the tutor groups attendance in compared to other tutor groups.

The attendance poster on page 12 is displayed in prominent areas within school. House tutors are encouraged to refer to the information frequently to help promote good attendance and punctuality.

Point to be considered

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. In a few cases parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional.

Practicalities of managing medical absence

- If a member of staff has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred they will contact the parents/carers to discuss it further
- If still concerned the House Leader will suggest that the pupil visit their GP or other health professional, if this has not already been done
- Any pupil whose attendance falls below 90%, may be asked to attend a meeting with the House Leader and EWO
- If parents/carers do not attend the EWO may make a home visit
- If attendance does not improve, the House Leader may request that parents/carers provide a medical note from the relevant health professional or may involve the school nurse
- If despite the request of a medical note, no note is forthcoming, the Academy may not be able to authorise absences unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to support the pupil's inability to attend school.

Attendance & Punctuality

Attendance

The Academy attendance target is **97%**, this is what we want all pupils to aim for and is deemed as good attendance.

Did you know that:

96% attendance is below the national average and classed as poor attendance!

90% attendance = 19 days off school

85% attendance = 29 days off school (a whole half term!)

80% attendance = 38 days off school

70% attendance = 57 days off school (a whole term!)

If you are taken out of school for a 2-week holiday during term time, this will mean that your attendance cannot be better than **94.7%** for that academic year!

If your attendance falls below **95%** your parents/carers may receive a letter informing them of our concern. If your attendance does not improve, then the issue may be referred to the Education Welfare Worker!

Attendance bands:

97%-100% Excellent! 97% is the Academy target!

93%-96% Be Careful! You could be missing up to two weeks of learning in a school year.

90% - 92% Improvement Needed! You are missing at least 2 weeks of learning in the school year.

Less Than 90% Persistent Absence. You are missing at least 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Punctuality

It is important that you arrive to school on time.

Do you realise that regular lateness = **absence?**

Over a school year:

5 minutes later every day = 3 days absent

15 minutes late every day = 10 days absent

30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

If you are late to school on 3 or more occasions in a half term, you may be issued a reflection to make up for the time you have missed.

3 lates = Breaktime Reflection

6 Lates = Lunchtime Reflection

9 lates = Afterschool reflection until 4.30

10 lates = Referred to Leader of Pupil Engagement and an afterschool reflection until 5.00

Attendance Awards

Awards will be given for achieving the following 100% attendance:

1 Term = Bronze Attendance Certificate

2 Terms = Silver Attendance Certificate

3 Terms = Gold Attendance Certificate



Every Friday the lunch order will be put on the daily notices, the year group with the best attendance and behaviour for that week will go for their lunch first!

At the end of each term, during the House Leader celebration assembly, pupils with 100% attendance will be entered into a prize draw!

Appendix 1

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

Stage 1	Below 97%	House Leader	letter to parents/carers if a pupil's attendance falls below 97%
			A pupil who is late to school on 3 occasions in a half term. A break time discussion with their House Leader, and a text sent home or note in planner.
Stage 2	Below 95%	House Leader	Letter sent to parents/carers if attendance falls below 95%. Pupil conversation held and attendance checklist completed.
			Pupil is late to school on 6 occasions in a half term. A lunchtime reflection issued. This is recorded as Persistent Lateness and a phone call home by the pupils House Leader.
Stage 3	Below 93%	House Leader	Attendance clinic - Letter to Invite parents/carers into school if attendance falls below 93%. Agreed action plan including no further authorised absences unless a medical note or appointment card is submitted to the Academy. Pupil Support Plan completed.
			Failure to attend attendance clinic, House Leader to inform Assistant Principal and a letter sent to parents. HL to continue to contact parents/carers.
			A pupil is late to school on 9 occasions in a half term. An afterschool reflection issued. This is recorded as a Persistent Lateness and a phone call home by HL to discuss reason for lateness.
Stage 4	Below 91%	Assistant Principal	A 10-day improvement letter is sent. If there is no improvement over this period then it will be referred to the EWO, who will issue Penalty Warning Notice and will notify parents/carers of this decision in writing.
			A pupil is late on more than 9+ occasions in a half term. An after school reflection issued. This is recorded as Persistent Lateness and a phone call home will be made.
Stage 5	Below 90%	Assistant Principal	Penalty notice referral completed and sent to the EWO Penalty notice issued by Education Welfare Service.
Stage 6	Where attendance fails to improve	Education Welfare Penalty Notice	Prosecution will be pursued by the Local Authority for: 10 sessions U code in a 12-week period 20 sessions O code in a 12-week period A period of unauthorised holidays (G – Code)

