



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
MIDDLE SCHOOL

BROMSGROVE
YEARS 5 - 8





Attendance Policy

2022-23

This policy was reviewed/updated by Natasha Hine (Assistant Head) @ St John's Middle School and is reviewed annually by the Trust.

Reviewed: November 2022

Next Review: December 2023

In collaboration with



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Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on schools to make arrangements for its pupils and states that:

“proprietors/governors of independent schools (which include Academies and Free schools) must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.”

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government January 2019) requires all schools to follow the procedure for protecting children from abuse. This Attendance Policy was written with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) which defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding children is consequently more than contributing to the protection of individual children and the school is committed to the development of policy and practice that supports children, and their families to be safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, contribute positively and achieve economic wellbeing.

The Spire Educational Trust strives to promote the welfare of our pupils by:

1. Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment
2. Identifying child welfare concerns and taking appropriate action
3. Using the curriculum to enable our children to develop keep safe strategies
4. Operating safe recruitment and selection procedures to prevent unsuitable people working with our children.

It also states that “Governing bodies and proprietors should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risk of them going missing in future.”

This policy also follows the DfE [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance](#) which states that “Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance. Local authorities, police constables, school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices. This means that while the guidance does not have the force of law, there is an expectation that it will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.”

The school policies including this attendance policy are designed to meet these needs and are available on request or via the school website. This policy applies mostly to points 1 and 3 above and reflects current legislation, accepted best practice and complies with government guidance.

1. Introduction

For your child 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 the absence is unavoidable.

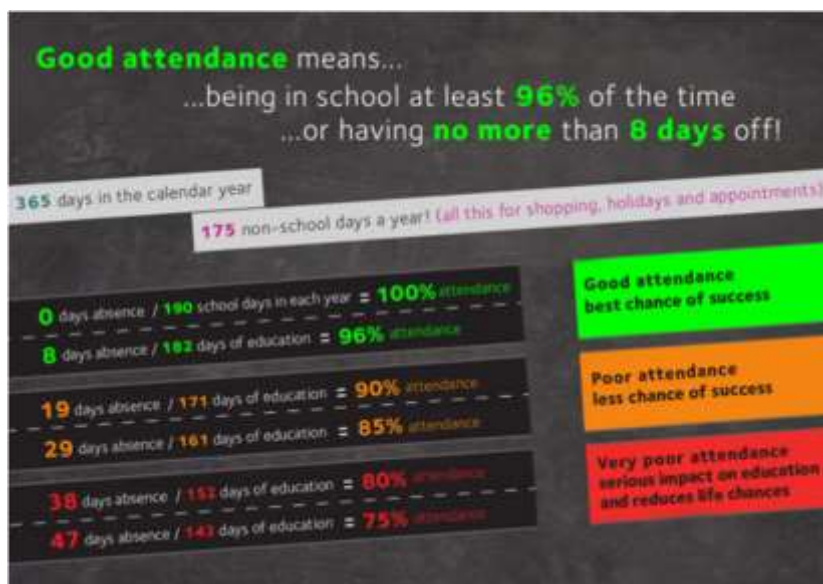
It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

For the purpose of this policy the definition of a parent is:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; or,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

2. Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. (See appendix 1)



Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

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

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child is paramount. Therefore, failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding concern.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must legally be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any 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 causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to 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.

It is recognised that any child may be off school, provided school has been notified, because they are ill. However, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Instead contact should be made initially with the form tutor or school office. (see the school's [Early Help offer](#) and [Behaviour for Learning and Positive Relationships Policy](#) as these outline how school can support.)

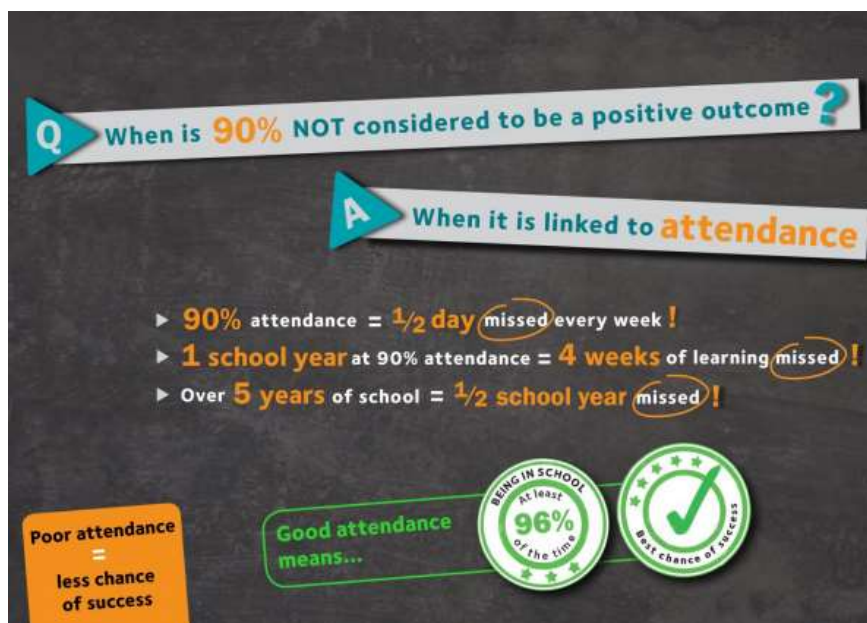
4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more 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.

For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%.

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.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Where appropriate, additional pastoral support may be offered for some children with a view to tackling any barriers to good attendance.



5. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Telephone the school office (selecting option 1) or message (via ParentMail) **by 9:10am** on the first day of absence.
- Unless the date of return is known, please update the school office on a daily basis.

If your child is absent we may:

- Telephone or text via Group Call on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Conduct a welfare visit* to the home if we have not heard from you for two days.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the school Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance if attendance doesn't improve or continues to cause concerns.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the class teacher, or most appropriate staff, in resolving any problems together (E-praise is the preferred way to make initial contact.) This is nearly always successful. It relies upon a positive relationship between school and the parent. If difficulties cannot be sorted out, or there is a lack of engagement in the supportive processes and procedures offered by school and unauthorised absences persist, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer who may issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

*** 2 members of the pastoral team visiting the home to ensure that the child is 'safe and well' – dependant on staff capacity.**

6. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Did you know that being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school over the year. Lateness is just as serious as non-attendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:50 am and we expect your child to be on school premises at 8:45am

If your child arrives after 8:50 am, they will receive a late mark on the electronic signing in system.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a late mark on the electronic system that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will receive a letter from the attendance officer, punctuality will be monitored for 2 weeks and you may be asked to meet with the attendance officer if the problem continues. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

7. 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.

Government regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a term time holiday. **Headteachers are not allowed** to grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays **unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

In **exceptional circumstances**, pupils may be granted leave of absence during term time for **not more than one week (5 school days) in any calendar year**. If you wish to make an application for a planned absence **please obtain a form from reception**. The form should be completed and forwarded to the school **not less than six weeks before** the planned absence is due to begin.

Where the application for planned absence has been submitted within the timeframe, all carers with 'Parental Responsibility' will be notified in writing of the decision.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

8. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to 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 to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1: The importance of good attendance.

| Attendance during one school year | Equals this number of days absent in year | Which is approximately this many weeks | Which means this many lessons missed | Action |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 100% | 0 days | 0 weeks | 0 lessons | Rewards. If attendance is greater than 96% and punctuality is good each half term then 75 points are awarded. |
| 96%-99% | No more than 8 days | Up to 1 ½ Weeks | No more than 37 lessons | |
| 95% | 9 days | 2 weeks | 50 lessons | Attendance Officer Identification and prioritisation. Awareness letter sent home informing child has fallen below school target % |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons | Attendance Officer Identification Intervention needed – PA letter sent to parents, attendance monitored for a short period of time- no improvement will result in parents invited to attendance meeting with AO and HOY. |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons | Next steps dependent on improvement, situation and engagement. Parents invited to attend meeting with AO and SLT. Step 1 – first notice given to parents. Step 2 – 15 day notice warning issued. Step 3 – Application for legal action made. |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons | |

NB – Although percentages monitored, sudden changes in attendance or patterns are raised as an attendance concern to allow early intervention. This is a guide and any actions taken will be dependent on individual circumstances.

Appendix 2: Strategies used to improve attendance/punctuality. (Recorded on Provision map)

This is not an exhaustive list but outline some examples of what strategies/provisions may be considered.

| Strategy/Provision – Office/SLT | Strategy/Provision – Class Teacher/Head of Year |
|--|--|
| Targeted First Day Response | Customised Reward/Privilege |
| Reminder that parents must notify of absence by specified time | Highlight benefits of good attendance to child (See Child friendly policy) |
| Letters home | Ensure parents are on, and can use e-praise for attendance. |
| Remind of the Attendance policy (parents) | Ensure pupil is on, and can use e-praise for attendance. |
| Highlight benefits of good attendance to parents | Ask parents to bring pupil to a designated person by a set time each day. |
| Remind of Legal responsibility regarding attendance | Safe Place |
| Letter from Attendance Officer to outline concerns and explain how to support. | Self-regulation/time out card |
| Request GP certificate/letter from parent | Buddy (Peer) |
| Contact School Health Nurse | Assign special responsibility/task suited to the pupil |
| Extra-Curricular Activities /Breakfast Club | Signs of Success Plan |
| Involving Parents (Attendance Meeting) | Incentives |
| Starting Well Partnership (Parenting Support) | Attendance Charts |
| Referral to other agencies (See Early Help Offer) | Motional Assessment and Pastoral support Plan put in place. |
| Write to GP | On Attendance Report |
| Attendance Improvement plan | Assistance to catch-up with work |
| Welfare checks | Positive Reporting |
| Refer to Child Missing Education Team (CME) | Link person/mentor |
| Modification of Curriculum/Timetable | |
| Staged Reintegration | |
| Change of Tutor Group | |
| Home visits/ Welfare checks | |

Appendix 3: Process Flow Diagram. (This process is linked closely to that followed in the Behaviour For Learning and Positive Relationships Policy as well as the Early Help Statement.)



This flow diagram is for use with each student whose attendance is causing concern. It suggests a process of action which may lead to an improvement in attendance. Intervention is likely to start with class teachers and progress as appropriate.

Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2022 to 2023 academic year

Updated September 2022 - This guidance will be reviewed before August 2023

Attendance expectations

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have confirmed COVID-19

If a child or young person aged 18 or under tests positive for COVID-19, they should try to **stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days**.

Signed.....
Mrs Rosie Shorter
Chair of The Spire CE Learning Trust

Date.....

Signed.....
Mr. Geraint Roberts
Executive Head (CEO)

Date.....