Attendance Policy

Reviewed by the Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Committee
On: 28 November 2019

Ratified at the St Edward's FGB
On: 12 December 2019

Next review date: December 2021

SLT are responsible for oversight of this policy's implementation

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 he/she is 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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

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.

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
- 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 pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to contact the Local Authority who may issue a fixed-penalty notice

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.
- To regularly work with the attendance officer in the monitoring of attendance across the school
- 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.

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.
- 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;
- 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
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year for their child
- 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.
- 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). Students who are arriving late to school may also be required to have a C2 detention.
- 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 LA 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.

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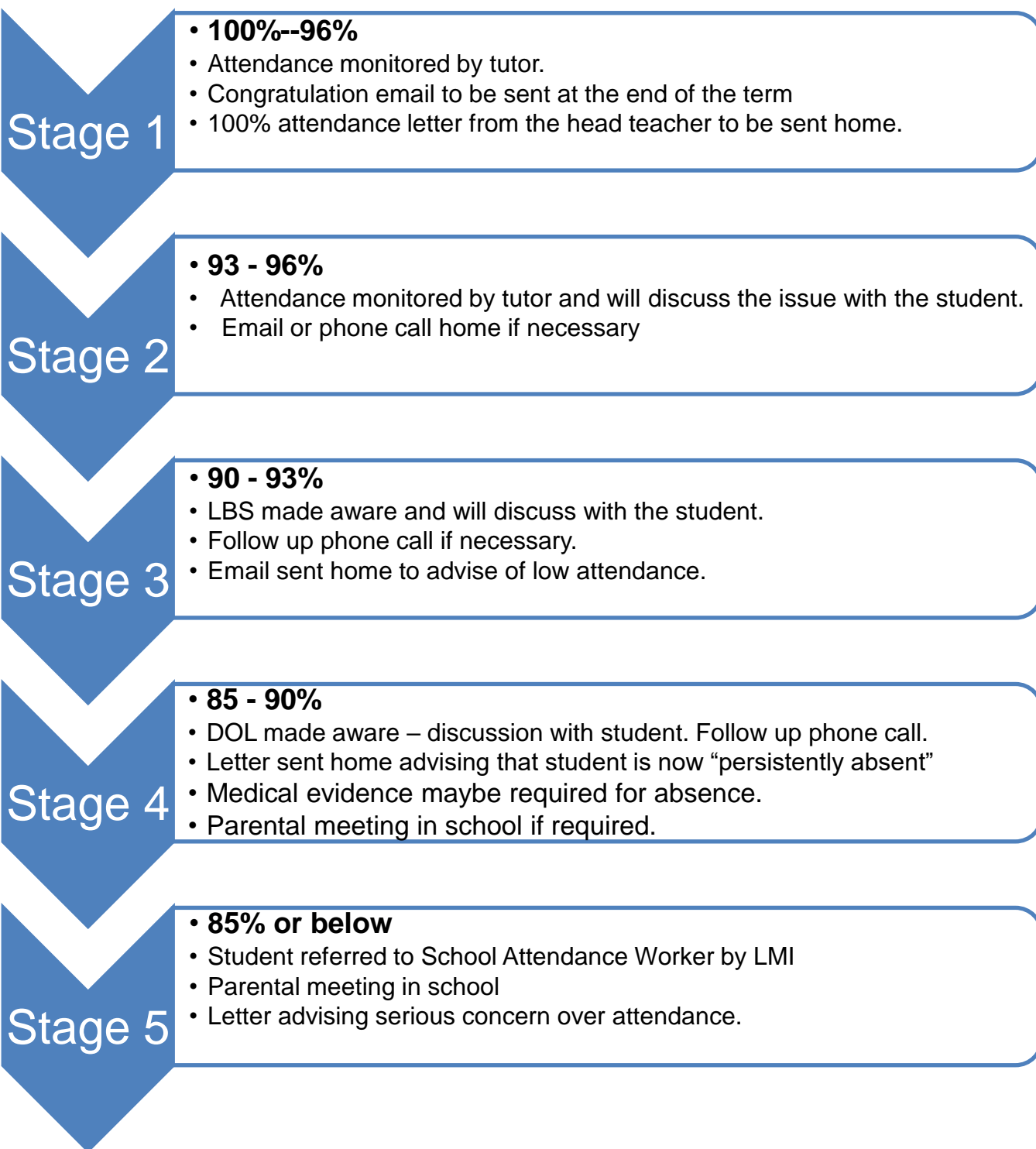
The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- 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 monitored by tutor.
- Congratulation email to be sent at the end of the term
- 100% attendance letter from the head teacher to be sent home.

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 referred to School Attendance Worker by LMI
- Parental meeting in school
- 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 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.

Member of SLT responsible for oversight of the implementation and review of this policy: Mr D Hurley

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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

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