



Attendance Policy

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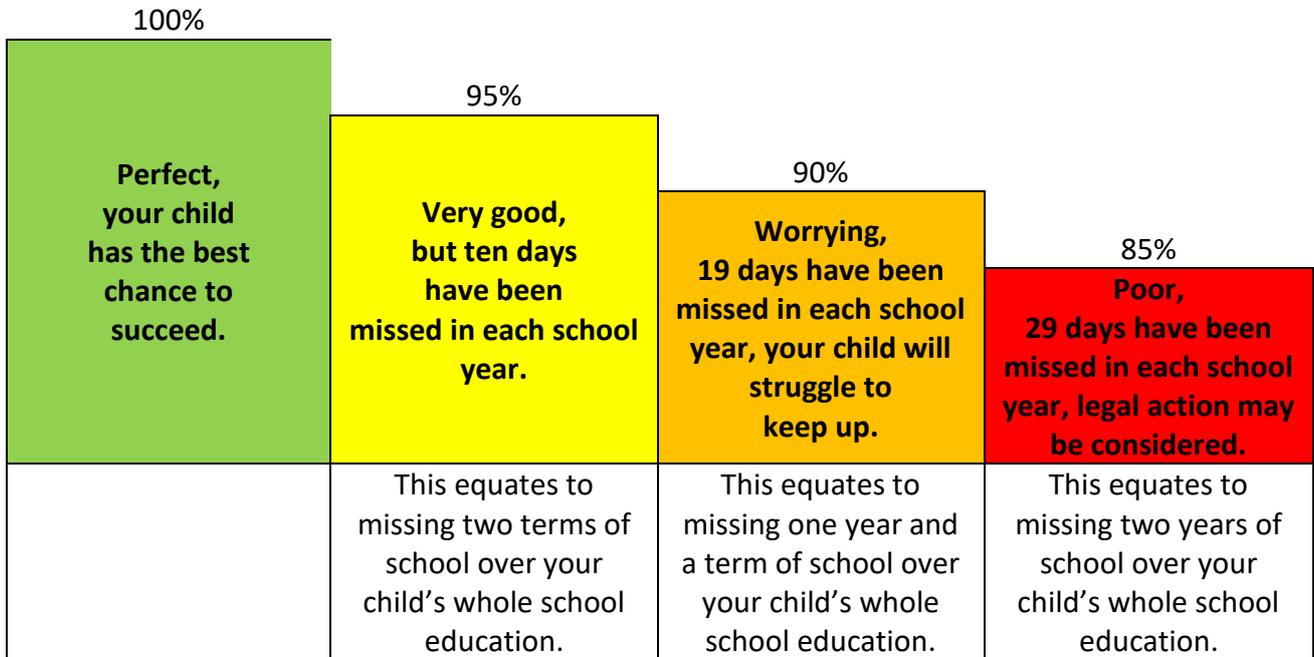
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Attendance Policy

It is the academy’s policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, to promote excellent attendance by all pupils, (including Nursery pupils), to ensure a consistent learning environment and minimise disruption to the delivery of the curriculum.

MISSING SCHOOL MEANS MISSING OUT



The graph shows the effect of missing time from school. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind. At primary school level, pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in Key Stage 2 are a quarter less likely to achieve the expected standard or above in reading, writing or maths tests, than those with no absence.

1.0 Principles

1.1 Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

1.2 The school will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. This is reinforced in the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. Good attendance by students will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

1.3 All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable 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 may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

1.4 This attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students. Under the Education Act (Student Registration) Regulations 1996 schools have a **duty** to refer to the Local Authority any child of compulsory school age who is continuously absent from school for two weeks without explanation or whose attendance is irregular or whose punctuality is an issue.

1.5 Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required

1.6 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause.

1.7 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission for “leave” has been given. This includes:

1. Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
2. Truancy during the school day.
3. Absences which have never been properly explained.
4. Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
5. Parents taking children out of school for unauthorised holidays.

1.8 TSSMAT schools will never authorise the unilateral withdrawal of students by their parents as a result of a parental concern or complaint. Such absences can be damaging to children's education, are unnecessary, and, as a consequence, will be unauthorised.

1.9 TSSMAT Schools have a safeguarding duty, in respect of all of its pupils, to investigate unexplained absences as per the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. The school will share relevant data to the Local Authority and other relevant professionals as required.

2.0 Working Together

2.1 Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the school in resolving any problems.

2.2 Wherever possible the school will take action to improve a student’s attendance and address any underlying causes of problems before requesting support of the Education Welfare Workers or the Local support Team.

3.0 Expected First Day of Attendance

3.1 The school will enter students on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will be attending the school. For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

3.2 Should a student fail to attend on the agreed or notified date, then the School Secretary will establish contact with the parents / carer to ascertain the reason for this. Deletions from the Admission Register will only occur on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

3.3 The school will notify Local Authority within 5 days, as required by Government Guidance, of students who have been added to the Admissions register other than at standard transition points.

4.0 Children Missing From Education

4.1 TSSMAT School's will inform the Local Authority of all deletions from the Admissions Register as stated in regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, apart from at standard transition points.

4.2 Should a student meet the criteria of being deleted from the Admissions Register and their whereabouts are unknown, as stated in the grounds for deleting a student from the school admission register, section 6 and 8, then the Attendance Intervention Manager will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is.

4.3 The Children Missing Education Officers, at the Local Authority, will be informed that enquiries into the whereabouts of students as stated in the above criteria. TSSMAT school's will remove the student from the Admissions Register, following the Guidance, and the CTF file will be retained until further advice is provided from the Children Missing Education Officers.

5.0 Overview

5.1 The following procedures are followed for monitoring children's attendance:

A weekly register for each class is printed from RM Integris ready for Monday morning registration.

Teachers to take the register and return the school office by 9.10am.

Attendance to be recorded on RM Integris with the appropriate absence codes, (see Appendix B). Any unexplained absences are to be investigated as follows:

A text to be sent to parents asking them to contact school immediately regarding their child's absence.

If parents do not contact school after receiving a text regarding their child's absence then the first contact with parental responsibility will be telephoned.

If no response from first contact telephone second contact with parental responsibility.

If no response other contacts should be contacted.

If the child is absent for five consecutive days with no response from parents then a CME, (Children Missing in Education), report should be made to the local authority.

Each half-term a report is produced for all children whose attendance is under 97% and children who are persistently late for school. This report should be sent to Heads of School and the Executive Head, and should be annotated with relevant notes; eg, children with medical problems etc. Heads of School in consultation with the Executive Head will then inform attendance officers which children letters should be sent to, (see Appendices C and D).

Should the attendance not improve, a second letter may be sent.

Where there is still no improvement parents may be invited to a meeting at school with the Head of School. Support or guidance may be put into place at this stage, such as a referral to the school nurse or targets set regarding attendance.

The Head of School will support students whose attendance gives cause for concern. This will involve assisting in resolving situations to ensure the improvement of the student's attendance. The Heads of School will undertake case work with students and, their parents where thought appropriate, to improve the student's attendance. This is completed up to the threshold where statutory action is deemed necessary. The Heads of School will then provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions which could result in a:

Fixed Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1966 s.444. Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued, the fine is, 'per parent/carer and per child', regardless of who applied for the leave. The parent has three choices:

1. A set fine if paid within 21 days. This will be increased if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
2. An Education Supervision Order or School Attendance Order on the child.
3. In the case of non-payment of the fine the Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty then this would result in a criminal record for that parent. Current Penalty Notice figures can be found in Appendix A

5.2 Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Worker themselves, to ask for help or information. Education Welfare Workers are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their address is:

For St. Mary's and Richard Crosse:
Staffordshire County Council

The Old House
Eastern Avenue
Lichfield
Staffordshire
WS13 7SQ
Telephone: 01543 334797

For Howard:
Staffordshire County Council
Tamworth ASO
4th Floor Marmion House
Lichfield Street
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B79 7BZ
Telephone: 01827 782004

6.0 General Absences

6.1 TSSMAT schools apply the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- 1 Parents should ring school to report their child's absence by 9.10am on the first day of absence.
- 2 If your child is absent for **more than 1 day**: telephone school again indicating how long your child is likely to be absent.
- 4 In the case of an enforced closure or school transport difficulties due to bad weather the "Y" code is used, which is not classed as an absence. This can be applied to students for whom getting to school is problematic due to adverse weather even if the school is officially open. Ordinarily, relates to students and students who live beyond walking distance of the school.

7.0 Lateness

7.1 All students should be on the school site by **08:40**.

7.2 The school monitors late arrival of students. In the morning those arriving through the school gate later than 08:45 will be marked as arriving late via a 'L' in the register.

7.3 Persistent lateness will be monitored. Should a student be late on three occasions within a half term then this will trigger a letter home. If persistent lateness continues, the Headteacher/Head of School will become involved and actions will be taken to overcome any barriers to improve punctuality. Ultimately, continued unauthorised lateness could result in records being provided to the Local Authority which may result in Statutory Action being taken.

7.4 Morning registration closes at 09:10. Students arriving after 09.10 will have a 'U' (unauthorised absence) recorded on the register, unless there is an acceptable reason verified by a parent / carer. Where a student does arrive late, **it is ESSENTIAL, that this is recorded in the latebook.**

8.0 Absence for Medical Appointments

8.1 We would ask that, wherever possible, doctor and dental appointments are made outside the school day. If this is not possible, please call the school and **provide the school with a copy of medical evidence**, such as the appointment card. Your child's attendance record will then be marked '**M**'. This represents an authorised absence. The student should sign out at the school office and must sign in when returning to school following the appointment.

8.2 Should there be ongoing medical appointments or the need for time off due to the medical issue then a letter stating this from a medical professional will be required. If the medical professional state that this is ongoing and sets a date to review the situation, then no further evidence will be required until the date of the review.

9.0 Planned Absences

9.1 The Directors' policy is to fully comply with the new Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event. A, 'Leave of Absence', form is available from the school office. Should the request be for other planned absences such as participation in sporting or other educational representative activities such as a dance or music exam then the same procedure should be followed. A notification of the exam date, such as the confirmation letter, should also be sent to school. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school may be deemed as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

9.2 Absence from school which is not authorised is classified in two ways:

1. **Unauthorised leave of absence:** for any absence from school which has been requested but not granted.
2. **Unauthorised absence:** for any other absence from school which we cannot authorise, but has not been requested.

9.3 If a parent does not apply for leave but we believe that the student has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent to express our concern. The parent will be expected to provide contrary evidence to support the absence and school should receive this by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised leave of absence** and the relevant procedures will be applied. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

9.4 **Unauthorised leave of absence** presents a risk of a Penalty Notice being issued.

Please note that:

1. There is no overall level of attendance percentage requirement;
2. A parent can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year;
3. The period for the sessions of unauthorised absence will be based on the previous three school terms and so can cross over years.

9.5 Where there is ***persistent unauthorised absence*** then a Penalty Notice can be considered where there are 20 sessions, (10 days), of unauthorised absence during the current and previous two terms. In this situation, the parent will only receive one warning notice period in an academic year. After this the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory action if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

10.0 Other Circumstances

10.1 It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement).

11.0 School Attendance Targets for TSSMAT Schools

11.1 The attendance target for the academic year 2017-18 is: **97%**

11.2 This target is based on improving the level achieved the previous year. Registers are inspected annually by the Authority and the school is advised of the ongoing % figure after each inspection.

11.3 The school will notify the Local Authority, at regular intervals, as required by Government Guidance, any students who fail to attend school regularly.

12.0 Those People Responsible for Attendance Matters in this School are:

St. Mary's:	Attendance Manager	- Jon Wynn
	Attendance Administrator	- Amanda Outhwaite
Richard Crosse:	Attendance Manager	- Nicola Jarrett
	Attendance Administrator	- Zoe Bolton
Howard:	Attendance Manager	- Lesley Denby
	Attendance Administrator	- Claire Robertson

13.0 Summary

13.1 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. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

13.2 All TSSMAT Schools have full Dyslexia Friendly Status which supports the Dyslexia Friendly Initiative organised by Staffordshire County Council in co-operation with the British Dyslexia

Association. The needs of the dyslexic learner will be taken into account in all lessons. The focus is firmly on how all lessons are planned, resourced and taught and also in the way teachers are supported through school policy, practice recognises the opportunity for an emphasis on inclusive mainstream strategies, designed to empower all learners to be the best they can be.

13.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with our Equality Policy which seeks to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across all aspects of school life.

APPENDIX A

Current Penalty Notice Payment Details (November 2016)

Fixed Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued, the fine is, 'per parent/carer and per child', regardless of who applied for the leave. The parent has three choices:

1. A fine of £60 if paid within 21 days.
2. A fine of £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
3. In the case of a non-payment of the fine the Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996. If found 'guilty' then this would result in a criminal record for that parent.
4. If prosecution takes place under section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996, the maximum fine is £1000 per parent per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

APPENDIX B

Absence and Attendance Codes

Code	Title
/\	Present at School
L	Late before register is closed
B	Off-site educational activity
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
G	Holiday not authorised by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
X	Not required to be in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

APPENDIX C

Letter – Attendance below 97%

Date

Address

Dear _____

It has come to my attention that _____'s attendance this term is only ____%. If ____ attendance continues at this low level ____ will miss _____ weeks of lessons this school year.

As your child is of statutory school age there is a legal requirement for ____ to attend school on a regular, stable basis and any child whose attendance is low will be referred to the Education Welfare Office who may choose to investigate further.

At school we feel that consistent attendance and punctuality are an important part of life's learning process and would therefore ask that you give this matter your urgent consideration.

If there are any underlying issues which are affecting your child's attendance at school, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to a marked improvement in the coming term.

Yours sincerely



Mr P J Lovern
Executive Head Teacher

APPENDIX D

Persistent Lateness Letter

Date

Address

Dear _____

It has come to my attention that _____ has been late coming into school on ___ occasions this term. Please can you ensure that _____ arrives at school between 8.30 and 8.40am every school morning. Arriving at school late means she is missing vital instructions from her teachers and disrupting the lesson for the rest of the class

As your child is of statutory school age there is a legal requirement for her to attend school on a regular, stable basis and any child whose attendance is low will be referred to the Education Welfare Office who may choose to investigate further.

At school we feel that consistent attendance and punctuality are an important part of life's learning process and would therefore ask that you give this matter your urgent consideration.

If there are any underlying issues which are affecting your child's attendance at school, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to a marked improvement in the coming term.

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