

St Matthias School

Attendance Policy

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality to school
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality to school and all lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data in regular governor reports
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Liaise with the LA who will issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Ensuring regular calls and meetings with parents are taking place to discuss attendance issues
- Ensuring targeted interventions are being delivered and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachel Dickins and can be contacted via enquiries@st-matthias.com

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when the LA are considering issuing fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jayne Smith and can be contacted via enquiries@st-matthias.com

3.5 Form Tutors and Class teachers

Form Tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance via class charts for each lesson / session daily basis, using the correct codes.

3.6 The Attendance officer / Admin Team

The Attendance officer / Admin Team School staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day and lesson on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school, form and all lessons on time

4. Support for School Attendance

4.1 Communicating with parents/carers where attendance is a concern

When school has concerns about the attendance of a student, staff will do their best to make the parents/carers aware of the concerns about their child's attendance in the most accessible way possible.

4.2 Students who are reluctant to attend

Sometimes students can be reluctant to attend. The school encourages parents/carers and students to be open and honest about the reason for the student's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/carer to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. The school needs to understand the reasons why a student is reluctant to attend, in order to be able to support students and parents/carers in the best way.

We aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to remove barriers to good school attendance. Staff strive to establish good working relationships with the families of our students through good communication and regular meetings to address on-going attendance concerns. If necessary, staff signpost our families to specialist support services who can work with the family and school in a multi-agency approach.

4.3 Child on Child Abuse

All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them physically, verbally, and emotionally both in person and online. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

The school recognises that a student may be reluctant to attend if they are experiencing any kind of child on child abuse. The school constantly strives to promote a positive and inclusive culture where all students feel valued, have a strong sense of 'belonging' and are fully supported if things go wrong.

The school takes all reports of child on child abuse extremely seriously. All incidents will be investigated, appropriate measures will be taken for all students involved, including working with and making referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

The school recognises that child on child abuse is a rarely-witnessed event, and that the most likely source of information will be through hearsay (either direct from the victim, or indirectly through witnesses or parents).

If a parent/carer thinks their child is experiencing child on child abuse, or is concerned their child may be involved in child on child abuse in any way, they are encouraged to report this to the school as quickly as possible, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

Please see the schools Anti-Bullying policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Mobile Device guidance for more information on how child on child abuse is addressed.

4.3 Children in Care

Foster Carers do not have parental responsibility for the children in their care, although they are responsible for ensuring their regular school attendance.

If a Child in Care is not attending school or there are concerns about their attendance, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority's Virtual School and the child's social worker, as well as communicating with the child and foster carer.

4.5 Disability Related Absence

School will ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made for disabled students (defined as those with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that child's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'). This may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is provided, as well as providing auxiliary aids and equipment, or tailored services.

4.6 Young Carers

School recognises that students who are Young Carers may have caring responsibilities that impact on their punctuality and/or attendance. Where this is the case the school will work with the student and family to encourage them to access appropriate support, including direct support from Young Carers and any other support the student and family may need; the school will also provide support in school where appropriate.

4.7 Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

EBSNA assessments are used with any students who are experiencing difficulty in attending school due to emotional reasons, such as stress, anxiety and/ or feeling overwhelmed. This can result in prolonged periods of absence from school. The assessments are used to inform an intervention that will support the individual students.

5. Phased Return to Full-Time Education & Part-time Timetables

5.1 In line with the expectations of the Department for Education, all students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

5.2 In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a student's behaviour.

School will follow the clear guidelines set out in the Wolverhampton City Council 'Part Time Timetables / Specialised Personal Learning Plans' e.g. Part -Time timetables must only be used in very limited circumstances for students not allowed or not able to attend either mainstream or special schools on a full-time basis, for example:

- Where there are behaviour difficulties and the school is using a part-time timetable as an intervention to avoid exclusion, part of a pastoral support plan (PSP) or a planned reintegration package.

5.3 If, for any reason, the school is unable to provide a student with a full-time education due to the student's needs, staff will work with the student, parents/carers and other agencies where appropriate, to come to an arrangement that is deemed to be in the best interests of the child wherever possible.

5.4 Any part-time timetable should be in place for the shortest amount of time possible, it must not be treated as a long-term solution. It should be reviewed at least every two weeks, whilst arrangements are made to support the student's return to full-time education at the school or, where appropriate, at alternative provision.

5.5 A decision to place a student on a part-time timetable should be approved by the Headteacher and must be agreed by the parents/carers. The SENCO and DSL, as well as any other relevant members of staff, should also be aware of such arrangements and involved with decision making where appropriate. Discussions and agreements should be clearly documented in writing and relevant information should be recorded in Class Charts, Provision Map or CPOMS. The school will be mindful of any additional safeguarding risks to the student when they are not timetabled to attend school and will therefore consider carefully whether a part-time timetable is an appropriate measure.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of every form and lesson time with a particular emphasis with the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.55am so that they are on time for the 9.00am start to the school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin/office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the student's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7.1 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parent/carers receive an announcement via classcharts to notify them of the lateness. An explanation is requested and Restorative interventions are issued. Where there is a pattern of punctuality meetings are arranged and the appropriate interventions are put in place e.g. a monitoring card.

6.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send an announcement to the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. The parent/carer of a student with a social worker or at risk will be called. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police (where the student is at particular risk) or complete a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

6.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be included in all of their academic progress reports. In addition to this all students are put into a Behaviour for Learning Target Group for attendance.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the

headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/school-attendance>. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 6.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller children travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

7.2 Legal sanctions (refer to appendix 2)

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 student 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 or withdraw the notice.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

8.1 The school recognises that rewarding good and improved attendance should be carefully considered in order to ensure it does not make students who have poor attendance, feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low attendance rate; its impact on the student's own learning or the learning or rewards for the class as a whole.

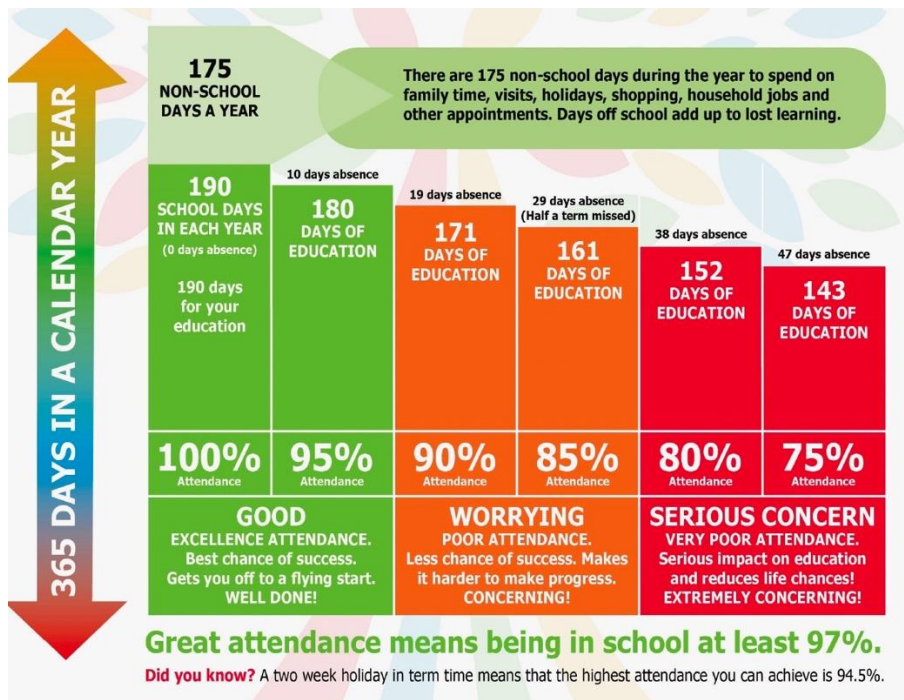
8.2 The school will regularly review any reward systems to ensure they are not negatively impacting on individual students or groups of students.

Attendance will be regular features of form time and assemblies. Attendance data will be shared and displayed around re school.

8.3 We expect students to achieve 97%+ attendance.

References are made to the following data:

What is the impact of not attending school?



How many lessons are missed?

Attendance	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	10 Days	2 Weeks	60 Lessons
90%	19 Days	3 Weeks 4 days	114 Lessons
80%	38 Days	7 Weeks 3 days	228 Lessons
75%	47 Days	9 Weeks 2 days	282 Lessons
50%	95 Days	19 Weeks	570 Lessons

What is the impact of arriving late to school?

When a student arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions; this can seriously disadvantage students. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning.

Minutes per day	Days lost in a year	Approximate number of lessons missed
5 Minutes	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 Minutes	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 Minutes	9 Days	45 Lessons

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to all staff, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

10. Children absent and missing from Education

Staff at St Matthias are aware that children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

Our response to persistently absent students and children missing education will support identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent students, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

We acknowledge that the types of children who are most at risk of going missing from education.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by Rachel Dickins. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti Bullying policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed

B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Student has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 - Legal Sanctions for Unauthorised Absence

Sanction	Potential Outcome	When Used
Penalty Notice	<p>The penalty is £60 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay may result in prosecution)</p> <p>Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.</p>	<p>For low level offences, as a tool to support improved attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution and a may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a student's unauthorised absence.</p> <p>If a student has an extended period or repeated periods of unauthorised absence, a</p>

		prosecution may be considered instead of a Penalty Notice.
Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996	<p>If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £1000 and ordered to pay court costs.</p> <p>The court may also impose a Parenting Order</p>	<p>It is for the Local Authority to determine whether a section 444(1) or section 444(1A) prosecution is most appropriate.</p> <p>First prosecutions are usually under s444(1)</p>
Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996	<p>If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £25000 and ordered to pay court costs.</p> <p>Other court outcomes include community sentences, such as Curfew Orders, Unpaid Work (Community Payback) or a prison sentence of up to three months.</p> <p>The court may also impose a Parenting Order</p>	<p>If a parent/carer is prosecuted more than once, or in extreme cases of non-attendance, the Local Authority may decide to prosecute under s444(1A)</p>
Education Supervision Order (ESO) under section 36 of the Children Act 1989	<p>The order is placed on the child and a supervisor from the Local Authority is appointed by the court, to give directions to the child and its parents, with a view to securing that the child is properly educated.</p> <p>Parents can be prosecuted if they persistently fail to comply with a direction</p>	<p>The Local Authority must consider applying for an ESO before prosecuting under 2444 Education Act 1996. A local Authority may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, proceeding with prosecution.</p>