



ST EGWIN'S C.E. MIDDLE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Key roles and responsibilities
4. Pupil expectations
5. Absence procedures
6. Contact information
7. Attendance register
8. Attendance officer
9. Punctuality
10. Missing children
11. Term time leave
12. Religious observances
13. Appointments
14. Young carers
15. Exceptional circumstances
16. Rewarding good attendance
17. Monitoring and review

Appendices

1. Generic letter re taking children out of school in term time
2. Request for absence due to religious observance

Statement of intent

St Egwin's Church of England Middle School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

We recognize that poor attendance could be a safeguarding issue and that we need to be alert as to reasons for any pupils' absence. We will also be vigilant to safeguarding concerns that could be indicated by poor attendance (see the Safeguarding policy on the school website).

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (August 2020) School Attendance Advice

- 1.2. All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. St Egwin's Church of England Middle School defines "absence" as
 - Not attending school for any reason.
- 2.2. St Egwin's Church of England Middle School defines an "authorised absence" as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- 2.3. St Egwin's Church of England Middle School defines an "unauthorised absence" as:
 - Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have not been properly explained.
 - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Day trips and holidays in term time.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4 St Egwin's Church of England Middle School targets "persistent absenteeism (PA)"

PA i.e. less than 90% attendance

An attendance of 90% is the equivalent to missing half a day per week during an academic year.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

- 3.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of St Egwin's Church of England Middle School
- 3.2. The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 3.3. The governing board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

- 3.4. The headteacher is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of St Egwin's Church of England Middle School.
- 3.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 3.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.7. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.
- 3.8. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.9. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
 - Are being educated from home.
 - Transfer to another school (including out of County)
 - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
 - Have an authorised medical note.
 - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
 - Have been permanently excluded.
 - If they are absent for 20 continuous days (unauthorised) and school cannot ascertain the whereabouts of the parents and child and if they fail to return after 10 days after an extended period of absence and again parents and pupil's whereabouts cannot be found.
- 3.10. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time. Attendance updates to all parents will be provided with the school reports.
- 3.11. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
- 3.12. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.13. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

4. Pupil expectations

- 4.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day
- 4.2. St Egwin's Church of England Middle School expects all pupils to attend school and lessons punctually.

5. Absence procedures

- 5.1. Parents are required to contact the school via phone or electronically every day of any absence (except in exceptional circumstances)
- 5.2. A written letter, email may also be submitted to school when the pupil returns.
- 5.3. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child every day they do not attend school. If parent is unavailable a message will be left requesting a call back.

- 5.4. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
 - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the School Census System.
- 5.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Key Stage coordinator/ Senior Teacher/Head teacher/ EWO
- 5.6. Regular meetings, discussions will take place between the EWO, attendance secretary and Key Stage Coordinator to discuss attendance
- 5.7. Falling attendance will be monitored and appropriate action will be taken according to school policy.
- 5.8. In line with 'Children missing Education Statutory guidance' St Egwin's Church of England Middle School will inform the Local Authority if there are 10 consecutive, cumulative days absence. This procedure is put in place to monitor any extended absences and impact on education along with addressing any Safeguarding concerns.

6. Contact information

- 6.1. Parents must provide at least two accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 6.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

7. Attendance register

- 7.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether the pupil is:
- Present.
 - Absent.
 - Attending an approved educational visit.
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- St Egwin's Church of England Middle School will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion we will record whether every pupil is:
Present;
Attending an approved educational activity;
Absent;
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or,
Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) Taken from DfE School Attendance 2020
- 7.2. St Egwin's Church of England Middle School will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:
- / = Present in the morning
 - \ = Present in the afternoon
 - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
 - C = Authorised absence
 - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
 - H = Authorised holiday
 - I = Illness
 - M = Medical or dental appointments
 - R = Religious observance
 - B = Off-site educational activity
 - G = Unauthorised holiday
 - O = Unauthorised absence
 - U = Arrived after registration closed
 - N = Reason not yet provided
 - X = Not required to be in school

- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z – Pupil not on admission register

7.3 Authorised absence is where school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. (DfE 2020)

Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or for which no permission has been given. These are offences by the parent. (DfE 2020)

7.4 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code # will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example: induction days.

7.5 Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

8 Education Welfare Officer

8.4 If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to our Education Welfare Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through various strategies as agreed in partnership with school.

8.5 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer will collate evidence and request sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices from the Local Authority.

9 Punctuality

9.1 Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.30 am. They are expected to be registered in their form rooms by 8.37 am. Any child arriving after this time needs to report to the school office to be signed in and registered as late. Any child arriving after the close of registers (9.10 am) will receive an unauthorised late mark unless a satisfactory reason is given. This will result in a pupil being absent on the attendance report for the morning session.

Taking siblings to school, car troubles, pupils refusing to get dressed etc are not acceptable reasons to arrive after 9.10 am

10 Missing children

- 10.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from a Senior teacher or a designated teacher.
- 10.2 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:
- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **headteacher, the office or senior teacher** immediately.
 - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
 - Staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises.
- 10.3 If the pupil has not been found quickly then the parents (or other emergency contact if parents / carers uncontactable) of the pupil will be notified.
- 10.4 If the parents/ carers have had no contact from the pupil, then the police may be contacted.
- 10.5 The incident will be recorded using our record keeping systems by the person notifying the parents.
- 10.6 If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a Child who is Looked After (CLA), or has any special educational needs and/or disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 10.7 When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 10.8 The Head teacher or senior teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 10.9 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 10.10 The Head teacher or senior teacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 10.11 Policies and procedures will be reviewed in light of the incident.

11 Term-time leave

- 11.1 At St Egwin's Church of England Middle School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 11.2 Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- 11.3 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. **Requests for term time absence should be requested by the parent or guardian on our Leave of Absence form at least 6 weeks in advance. Appropriate forms to request a leave of absence are available from the school office and the School website.**
- 11.4 If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

12 Religious observances

- 12.1 St Egwin's Church of England Middle School may take advice if necessary from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals. However, in most cases one, or for certain religious observances two days, will be seen as appropriate.
- 12.2 Parents must inform the school in advance, where possible, if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 12.3 The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

13 Appointments

- 13.1 As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.
- 13.3 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

14 Young carers

- 14.1 St Egwin's Church of England Middle School, understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- 14.2 St Egwin's Church of England Middle School, takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies eg Worcestershire Young Carers, if appropriate.

15 Exceptional circumstances

15.1 When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

15.2 Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school is fully or partially closed.
- Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

15.3 The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

16 Rewarding good attendance

16. Good attendance and punctuality may be rewarded in a variety of ways.

17 Monitoring and review

17.1 St Egwin's Church of England Middle School, monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year. The school has processes and protocols to address attendance concerns. For example you may be asked to attend a meeting in school with Key Stage leaders.

17.2 Monitoring will have different foci eg individuals, groups (Gender)

17.3 Details of our absence levels can be found upon request via the school office

17.4 This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher

17.5 Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

COVID 19

The following link is recent govt guidance on attendance and will need to be read alongside our policy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

St Egwin's Church of England Middle School will work proactively with families to encourage a return to school after lockdowns, understanding the exceptional circumstances the Pandemic has caused

Appendix 1

Letter to all parents re taking children out of school during term time

Dear parent

Since the amendment to The Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 regarding leave of absence, we have continued to receive a number of requests to take children out of school during term time and have had to adapt our protocols and processes.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that this legislation makes it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Any request must be submitted in advance of the desired period of absence on our **Leave of Absence form** and will be considered on its individual merits. Request for Leave of Absence Forms can be obtained from the school office, or downloaded from our website in the **Parents section**. Unless there is evidence of exceptional circumstances for the request, the leave of absence will not be granted.

In line with Worcestershire County Council guidance, if the request is not approved, but still taken, the absence will be recorded as "**unauthorised**" and parents/carers may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

We realise that the vast majority of parents do not take family holidays in term time and we hope that you will continue to support us with this.

Head teacher

Appendix 2

Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent, and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Mr Pullan
(Headteacher)