



St Matthias ACADEMY



Attendance Policy

We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and responsibility.

Member of staff responsible:	Attendance Officer
Adopted	September 2015
Date of First Review:	September 2017
Date of Second Review:	September 2018

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

At St Matthias Academy we are committed to our mission statement:

We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and social responsibility.

We provide full time education for students who are permanently excluded, or at risk of exclusion and assessment places.

We offer a curriculum that combines a focus on academic subjects with a wide range of enrichment programmes through Art, Food Studies and Sport programmes to support for our pupils' personal and social development.

Each Student has an Individual Education Plan which is reviewed termly. Targets for each student address learning and personal development needs as well as planning next steps.

Students stay with us for varying lengths of time and are supported throughout transitions to new placements or schools where there are identified as the best long-term setting for the student.

To realise this we believe excellent attendance is the single most important factor enabling us to provide the best support for pupils in achieving their personal goals and targets.

1. Introduction

1.1 St Matthias Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.2 St Matthias Academy values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and will try to resolve any difficulties.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents / carers must ensure that students receive efficient full -time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 Under the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure parents / carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary use legal enforcement .

2.3 The Education Regulations 2013 requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.4 The register must record whether the pupil was

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

3. Categorising absence

3.1 Where students are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher or St Matthias Academy attendance officer and cannot be authorised by parent /carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

3.3 Late arrival registration is between 9.30 – 9.45 some students arriving after this time will be marked as present as some pupils travel a long distance to attend. Lates will be marked as such on SIMs at the end of Lesson 1. Persistent latecomers receive sanctions according to the academy behaviour policy and parents are informed. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 11.00 if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Academy Council will:

- Annually review the academy's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within agreed timescale each year,
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all, including those who are educated off - site
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Identify a member of the Academy Council to lead on attendance matters,

4.2 The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/ carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which enforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and achieve
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/ carers
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Academy Council or lead member.

4.3 The Attendance Officer will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/ carers.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/ carers
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students including those educated off -site
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families.

4.4 The Family Tutor will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/ carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/ carers
- Discuss issues of attendance and punctuality in Behaviour Review sessions and in Individual Behaviour Plan meetings with pupils and parents/ carers
- Take an active role in monitoring attendance and work with office staff and the attendance officer to contact parents when an absence has been unauthorised.

4.5 Parent / Carers will:

- Ask school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties

- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school, take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same message from both school and home.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences - where possible make appointments after school hours.

5. Using Attendance Data

5.1 Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern

5.2 Every week the Attendance Officer will provide all staff with attendance data

5.3 The student's attendance for the previous week will be recorded as follows:

Green = Attendance above baseline

Red = Below baseline

5.4 The Senior Leadership team will receive complete set of data

5.5 The attendance data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of interventions

5.6 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6. Support Systems

6.1 St Matthias Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or school.

Parent / Carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance. This will help school identify any additional support that may be required.

6.2 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parent/carers and pupils
- Learning centre / Library tutoring
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reward systems / Certificates
- Time limited re-integration timetable

6.3 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents / carers and students

6.4 Where parents /carers fail or refuse to engage with support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, St Matthias Academy will consider the use of legal sanctions.

7. Legal Sanctions

7.1 Where interventions fails to bring about an improvement in attendance the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken.

7.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent / carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age then they are guilty of an offence

7.3 A parent / carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8. Leave of Absence

Parent/Carers who need to take their child out of school during term time due to **exceptional circumstances** must send a written request to the head teacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

8.1. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

8.2 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the Magistrates court.

Appendices

(1)

Penalty warning letter

Dear

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
(Name of pupil). Registered pupil at (School).

This is a formal warning that you are in breach of the above regulations. Your child (name of child) has unauthorised absence of 21 sessions or more in the previous and/or current term and this empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty notice.

Unless your child attends regularly a penalty notice will be issued. You will not receive another warning before the fine is imposed.

The penalty notice requires you to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

If you are issued with a penalty notice this enables you to discharge your potential liability for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 of failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school. If you do not pay the fine you will be liable for prosecution for this offence.

If you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me

Yours sincerely

Julie Price
Attendance Officer

