



## Attendance Policy

### 2021-22

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

<b>Member of staff responsible:</b>	<b>Attendance Officer</b>
<b>Adopted</b>	<b>September 2015</b>
<b>Date of First Review:</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Date of Second Review:</b>	<b>September 2018</b>
<b>Date of Third Review</b>	<b>September 2019</b>
<b>Date of fourth Review</b>	<b>February 2021</b>

## **Covid Amendment**

### **New National Restrictions from 5th November 2020 - Attendance Update**

#### **Update to guidance**

**On 4th November 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance relating to how New National Restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) impact education, childcare and children's social care settings. - Pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.**

**- The government states there are no plans to close settings or implement rota systems as they want to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our children.**

**If a family is reluctant to send their child in due to anxieties around COVID-19 there is the possibility of offering a 'blended learning approach' eg. Remote learning plus 1:1 sessions in an outdoor session/sports based/walk and talk to get them out and check wellbeing, plus regular welfare calls.**

**Blended learning approaches are appropriate bespoke learning packages to support the needs of a young person who is having difficulty processing the complex health and safety issues surrounding COVID-19, and as a result are in a regular state of heightened anxiety and dysregulation. In these circumstances we may decide with the support of our specialist team and the parents/carers to deliver a blended learning package for that child. Such a blended approach will be reviewed regularly and the young person will be receiving a supportive transition to a fuller on-site programme of learning as and when it is felt they can manage the higher sensory setting of the Academy.**

## **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. By 'regular school attendance' we expect all students to attend every day that they are expected to attend.

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 2016 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

2.5 Dual registered students. St Matthias has a number of students who are dual registered with another educational setting and attendance certificates are sent weekly to and from main provision.

## 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 SLT 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 9.25 – 10.00 some students arriving after this time will be marked as present as some pupils travel a long distance to attend and maybe affected by local transport issues. Lates will be marked as such on SIMs at the end of Lesson 1. Persistent latecomers receive sanctions according to the academy

Engagement Policy and parents are informed. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 10.00 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 Learn@ Trust 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 2016 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 2016 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 parents/ carers.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England 2016 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 Group 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 for three or more days.

#### **4.5 Parents / 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.

#### **4.6 Office staff will:**

- Record the attendance record of students on a daily basis in the SIMs register system
- Where a student is expected in school but is absent and no contact with home has been forthcoming first-day calling via phone or text will be triggered to try to ascertain the reason for absence
- Where no contact with home has been gained by the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of student absence St Matthias Academy will trigger their welfare escalation procedure and carry out a home welfare visit to contact the student and their family.

## **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 SLT 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 fail 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.

7.4 The Code of Conduct followed by St Matthias Academy is that of the local authority within which it is located regardless of the home authority the student lives in

## 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

## **Appendices (2)**

### **Unauthorised absence**

Dear

St Matthias Park PRU is working hard to improve pupil attendance. XX's attendance is currently Y% which is below the acceptable level.

It is important that we work together to improve this situation especially as he/she has not attended this term.

Please can you contact Julie Price on 01179031320 as soon as possible to discuss absence. Non attendance at school will affect your child's educational progress. If this continues then a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made.

If school can offer any support to you with this situation we will be happy to do so.

Yours sincerely

Julie Price  
Attendance Officer

St Matthias Academy  
CC: Current Pupil File  
Yours sincerely

## **Appendices (3)**

### **Illness Letter**

Dear

Re

I am writing as I am concerned about the number of absences your child has had recently, when the reason given has been illness.

To date we have not asked for any evidence. From immediate effect we will now require evidence to show your child has been ill. This can be in the form of a note from their doctor, or you can show staff the prescribed medication they have been given.

If no evidence is provided they will be marked down as unauthorised for the day.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Julie Price  
Attendance Officer  
St Matthias Academy

## Appendices (4)

### Lateness

Date

Dear

Re

St Matthias Park is committed to providing a learning environment that encourages individual success and develops social responsibility. Following up all lateness and non- attendance we believe is essential to meeting this commitment.

**Name's** timekeeping is becoming a cause for concern. **Name** has been late **minutes (times)** so far this term. We need to work together to improve this situation without delay. To ensure that improvement is made, we shall be closely monitoring and following up on all lateness. Further learning time lost to lateness will be made up after school.

Your co-operation in making the necessary improvement is essential, and I trust that with your support **Name's** timekeeping will improve.

Should you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at the school on 0117 9031320.

Yours Sincerely

Julie Price

Attendance Officer  
St Matthias Academy

## Appendices (5)

### Contractual letter

Dear

Re:           DOB:           School:

As you are aware I have been monitoring your child's poor school attendance. I note that they have incurred further unauthorised marks and are still attending school irregularly.

Under the Education Act 1996 'It is the duty of parents/responsible adult to ensure the regular attendance of your child/children at school.' This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of illness or any unavoidable cause.

In order to address this problem please can you attend a meeting at the school **on XXXXX at XXXX**. A Parenting Contract for Attendance (PCA) will be compiled and an appropriate action plan agreed in order to help you improve your child's attendance. For your information I have enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate and I have highlighted those marks of concern.

If **Name** continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for me to place the facts before Education Welfare Service and Legal Services representatives, who may decide to take legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996. I sincerely hope that you will immediately take steps to ensure the regular attendance of your child and to avoid the necessity for me to take further action.

It is in your best interests to attend this meeting. If you do not attend the meeting and there is no valid reason for your absence the meeting will take place without you and your absence may be used as evidence against you if you are prosecuted.

Please contact me on 0117 903 1320 if you wish to discuss this letter.

Yours sincerely

Julie Price

Attendance Officer  
St Matthias Academy

**Appendices  
(6)**

**Leave of Absence request**

**St Matthias Academy**  
**Request for leave form for a school pupil to take time off**  
**during term time**

**Please ensure you have read and understood the regulations**

Taking your child out of school during term time could harm your child's educational progress. If absence is required for exceptional circumstances parents/carers may apply to the school for leave of absence. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Attendance Officer / Head Teacher acting on behalf of the Academy council.

Leave of absence forms can be collected from the school office and all requests should be submitted to the school at the earliest opportunity or at least two weeks before the first day of the absence. If authorisation is refused the parents/carers will be informed by telephone and in writing

If the absence is not authorised and the child is taken out of school, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service on the child's return to school to decide what action to take. A fine could be issued to each parent, for each child of £60.00 each.

To the Headteacher at St Matthias Academy

Would you please give leave of absence for \_\_\_\_\_(pupil's name)

to take time off from \_\_\_\_\_to \_\_\_\_\_because

(Please state reason)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent / Carer

Julie Price  
Attendance Officer  
St Matthias Academy

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

I have read St Matthias Academy Attendance Policy. I agree to follow this policy in my work with pupils attending St Matthias Academy.

Print Name .....Signed .....Date .....

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