



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St Edward's Cheltenham

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to establish the school's expectations regarding attendance and punctuality, the procedures to be followed in this area, and the relevant responsibilities of different groups within the school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety

Our policy reflects the DfE guidance, in particular 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2025), 'Working together to improve school attendance' (DfE, 2024) and 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (DfE, 2023).

This policy meets the requirements of 'Working together to improve school attendance' from the Department for Education (DfE, 2024) and refers to the Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (DfE, 2024) and 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (DfE, 2023).

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
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Additional DfE guidance includes:

- School census guidance on persistent absence thresholds
- Summary of responsibilities where mental health affects attendance
- Effective practice examples for supporting pupils with mental health-related attendance issues

St Edward's School maintains accurate admission and attendance registers in line with statutory requirements. The School will:

- Keep admission and attendance registers up to date and accurate
- Notify the local authority when a pupil is added to or removed from the school roll
- Inform the local authority when a pupil has been absent for 10 or more consecutive school days without authorisation and without a satisfactory explanation
- Make registers available for inspection by the local authority when required

The School monitors attendance and punctuality regularly to identify concerns, including patterns of persistent absence. All unexplained absences are followed up promptly, with particular attention to safeguarding and pupil welfare.

St Edward's School will share information and work with external agencies, including the local authority, where necessary to protect pupils or support their attendance and wellbeing.

2. Implementation

All of our students should attend school regularly and punctually so that they:

- receive the best education possible, by benefiting fully from the opportunities provided by the school and by accessing the full support needed to fulfil their potential;
- establish healthy attitudes and patterns surrounding attendance, which will extend into later life;
- avoid the detrimental effects that poor attendance has on social development.

The St Edward's Attendance Champion is Ms Alex McGowan, Deputy Head Pastoral & DSL.

All staff members are responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of all members of their class.

The school opens at 08:20, with registration at 08:30. Students arriving after 08:30 must sign in at the office and give a reason for their lateness. The school closes at 16:00 after lessons, or 18:00 after co-curricular clubs. Parents are responsible for their children before and after school hours, and for ensuring that students travel safely to and from school.

Parents must notify the school office by 9am on the first day of absence (telephone or email: 01242 388555 / absence@stedwards.co.uk) and continue to keep the school updated on progress. If no notification has been received, the school office will contact parents by 10am that day.

If a student is absent without explanation, the school will telephone home to establish the reason. Registers are regularly checked by the Student Care Lead, with concerns or unexplained absences referred to the Headteacher. Patterns of frequent short absences will also be investigated by the Headteacher.

If illness or injury is likely to result in an absence of five days or more, parents should inform the school immediately and continue to provide updates. For longer-term absences due to health needs, the school will work with families and external agencies to develop a plan to ensure continuity of education, including reasonable adjustments or flexible arrangements where appropriate. The school may also make follow-up courtesy calls.

Registers are checked on a regular basis by the Student Care Lead and any concerns or unexplained lengthy absences are referred to the Headteacher. If a student begins to demonstrate a pattern of frequent short absences, this will be investigated by the Headteacher.

2a Attendance Returns: informing the Local Authority

The school records and reports absences as required, liaising with the Local Authority attendance team. This includes:

1. **Prolonged unauthorised absence** – notifying the Local Authority of pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend regularly, or who have been absent for ten consecutive school days with unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O, and/or U).
2. **Sickness returns** – notifying the Local Authority of pupils with code I (illness) where there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days or more (consecutive or cumulative). This enables the school and Local Authority to agree provision to ensure continuity of education in line with statutory guidance. Only one return is required per continuous period of sickness in a school year.
- 3.

Where attendance concerns are linked to safeguarding risks or where pupils are already known to the Local Authority through statutory processes (e.g. Education, Health and Care Plans or social care involvement), the School will work constructively with the Local Authority and other agencies. This may include attending multi-agency meetings where it is in the best interests of the pupil's welfare and education.

St Edward's recognises that some pupils may face barriers to attendance linked to mental health needs or SEND. The School is committed to working with families and external professionals to ensure pupils are supported appropriately, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- adaptations to the curriculum, timetable or environment;
- temporary or phased part-time timetables (kept under review and used only as short-term support for reintegration);
- pastoral or counselling support;
- adjusted start or finish times where clinically advised;
- flexibility around medical or therapeutic appointments;
- liaison with external agencies such as CAMHS, GPs, Educational Psychologists or SEND professionals.
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Protocols for pupils with attendance difficulties linked to mental health or SEND will involve:

- early identification of concerns through close monitoring;
- meetings with parents/carers (and pupils where appropriate) to agree support;
- individual support plans with reasonable adjustments or interventions;
- regular review, ensuring temporary arrangements are time-limited with a pathway back to full-time attendance.
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The School will balance supporting pupils' health and wellbeing with its duty to provide full-time education, ensuring arrangements are appropriate, time-limited, and in the pupil's best interests.

Where attendance concerns persist, the School will:

- work in close partnership with parents to address barriers to attendance;
- implement support measures, including pastoral intervention, reasonable adjustments, or referrals to external agencies;
- escalate concerns through safeguarding procedures where non-attendance raises risks to welfare;
- review, in consultation with parents, whether St Edward's remains the appropriate placement if persistent non-attendance cannot be resolved.

In all cases, the School's priority is to act in the best interests of the pupil, balancing educational entitlement, wellbeing, and safeguarding considerations.

Parents are discouraged from organising holidays during term time. If an application is made by any parent, it will be considered by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility, and the Deputy Head Pastoral is the senior attendance champion) for monitoring the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and its implementation. The Headteacher will ensure that the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is regularly reviewed and implemented effectively, should you require any more detail regarding support of attendance please contact either the Student Care Lead (l.huxtable@stedwards.co.uk) or the Attendance Champion (a.mcgowan@stedwards.co.uk)

3. Attendance in conjunction with student illness

Please see the Appendix of this policy for common conditions relating to student illness.

Absence Reporting Procedure

There is a clear process for parents/carers to follow when a child is unwell and may not attend school:

- Parents/carers must telephone **01242 388555** or email absence@stedwards.co.uk before 9.00 am to inform the school of their child's absence and the reason.
- The school will ask for the nature of the illness and the expected duration of absence.
- The office will provide guidance on the recommended length of absence, if appropriate.
- Parents coming into school to drop off siblings of the absent child must also notify the office and the respective teacher.
- If a student's attendance falls below **96%**, parents will receive a notification. Where no improvement follows, a meeting with the Deputy Head Pastoral will be arranged.
- Persistent or severe absence may be escalated to the governors and/or the Local Authority for support and guidance. The school will act on Local Authority advice regarding penalty notices or other interventions.

The school's Attendance Champion is Ms Alex McGowan, Deputy Head Pastoral & DSL, who reviews attendance weekly. Concerns are shared with Form Tutors, who liaise with parents to support improvements in attendance.

For children missing in education, please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Contact for absence-related matters:

- absence@stedwards.co.uk
- Mrs Leanne Huxtable, Student Care Lead – l.huxtable@stedwards.co.uk

Decisions Regarding Attendance or Absence

Common sense is the best guide when deciding whether to send your child to school. Ask yourself:

Q Is your child well enough to join in the varied activities of the school day?

A If not, keep your child at home. *(Please note that the school cannot always offer to supervise your child if you do not think they can go outside at playtimes.)*

Q Does your child have a condition that can be passed on to other students or staff?

A If so, keep your child at home.

Q Would you take a day off work if you had this condition?

A If so, keep your child at home.

4. Uncollected child procedure

In the event of a child not being collected by a parent / carer at the end of the school day, a member of staff stays with the child while attempts are made to contact parents/carers, until the child has been collected, and will ensure the child is kept calm and doesn't become distressed by the situation. The secretary or appropriate member of staff will make all attempts possible to contact the parent/carer, using information provided on the application form and on the school's database. If it is not possible to contact the parents after 1-hour, social services will be contacted (for contact details please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy). Social services will aim to find the parent or relative if they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority. Under no circumstances do staff to go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them. A full written, dated and signed report of the incident is recorded in the child's file and in the safeguarding file. Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

5. New starters and leavers

Informing the local authority about starters and absences is a crucial responsibility. St Edward's reports all new starters and leavers to the local authority in a timely and accurate way. Reporting ensures compliance with legal requirements and helps ensure that pupils are not lost in education. St Edward's also makes contact with the previous or new school of the child so that there is a handover of compliance material. (This also links to our Safeguarding Policy).

6. Sponsored Students

All visa-sponsored students have additional attendance requirements we must be aware of. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) require the school to check attendance and engagement on your course and take action if students are absent from studies without permission or have not been engaging sufficiently.

Continued or serious cases of non-attendance can result in withdrawal of your Student Visa sponsorship and withdrawal from the school.

All absence will be recorded in Sponsor Notes on the SMS.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

The directors of Alpha Schools, as proprietors of St Edward's School, hold overall responsibility for ensuring that attendance is effectively monitored and managed. They ensure the School complies with all statutory requirements regarding admission and attendance registers, notifications to the Local Authority, and the management of absence in line with safeguarding duties.

Through regular reports, the directors review attendance trends, including persistent absence and vulnerable pupil groups, and hold school leaders to account for the effectiveness of systems that promote good attendance, support pupils facing barriers, and escalate concerns where safeguarding risks are identified.

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational monitoring and evaluation of this policy, ensuring it remains effective, adheres to statutory guidance, and aligns with the School's principles. The policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance, and any amendments are agreed with the Proprietors.

This governance and operational oversight together assure that attendance is rigorously monitored, pupils are supported to attend regularly, and absence is managed in a way that meets both statutory obligations and the School's safeguarding responsibilities.

| Date | Position | Name of Reviewer | Date of Next Review |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| August 2025 | Headteacher | Mrs A. Sandford-Squires | August 2026 |
| August 2025 | Proprietor | Mr A. Khan | August 2026 |

Appendix A

Common Conditions relating to Student Illness

Most conditions can be classified as one of a few minor health conditions. Whether or not you send your child to school will depend how serious you judge the illness to be. This guidance can help you make that judgement.

Coughs and Colds – a child with a minor cold or cough may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by shivers, drowsiness or a fever please keep your child away from school until the symptoms have been reduced and your child feels well enough to join in with a normal school day – usually 24 to 48 hrs.

If your child has a severe cough, it is best to consult your GP, who can provide guidance as to whether the child should stay at home. A severe cough can be debilitating for the child, interrupt lessons and your child will not be at their best.

Raised temperature – if your child has a raised temperature, they should not attend school until the temperature has returned to normal and they are feeling better.

Rash – rashes can be the first sign of many infections such as chicken pox and measles. Students with these conditions should not attend school. If your child has a rash, check with your GP or nurse before sending them to school.

Headaches – a child with a minor headache does not normally need to be kept off school. If the headache is accompanied by a fever or rash, then keep your child off school and consult your GP.

Vomiting and Diarrhoea – **non-viral** – students can be sick for many reasons – eating too many sweets and fizzy pop, eating a food which disagrees with them; you know your child and whether any of the above have caused the sickness. Some students also have specific intolerances to certain foods; they may be sick or have diarrhoea but are then well once the offending food has left their system. If any of the above are the reason for the vomiting, then the child may return to school once they feel well – after 24 hrs.

Vomiting and Diarrhoea – **viral** – vomiting can also be caused by a viral condition. It is this form of sickness that concerns us most as we do not want other students to be infected and viral conditions can spread through a school quickly. If you cannot identify a reason for your child's sickness and perhaps other members of the family have been ill, the sickness is accompanied by a fever, listlessness, a temperature and a general feeling of being unwell do not send your child to school for 48 hrs following the last incident of vomiting or diarrhoea. Some students recover very quickly and may appear to be well after 24 hrs but if the vomiting was not linked to overeating or type of food eaten, please keep your child away from school for the full 48 hrs just in case they are still carrying the virus.

If you return your child to school before the 48 hrs and the cause of the vomiting is known to be viral, the school will ask you to take your child home for another day even if they appear well.

Sore Throat – a child with a sore throat alone does not have to be kept from school. If your child is ill with it, the child should stay at home. A sore throat is often a precursor to a cold. If your child has not been their normal self at home but is not showing signs of illness when brought to school, parents should mention this to staff and ensure that contact details are correct and that they are obtainable.

APPENDIX B

Registration using Registration Codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024- ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ (August 2024) . Mapped codes definition:

| Code | Reason | Reporting Options | | | Classed by DfE | DfE Stats Classification |
|------|---|-------------------|------------|------------|---|--|
| | | Absence | Statistics | Authorised | | |
| / | Present AM | No | Yes | | | |
| \ | Present PM | No | Yes | | | |
| L | Late before reg closes | No | Yes | | | |
| K | Educational Provision Arranged by LA | No | Yes | Yes | Attending a place other than the school | Attending an approved educational activity |
| V | Educational Visit Or Trip | No | Yes | Yes | Attending a place other than the school | Attending an approved educational activity |
| P | Participating In A Supervised Sporting Activity | No | Yes | Yes | Attending a place other than the school | Attending an approved educational activity |
| W | Work Experience | No | Yes | Yes | Attending a place other than the school | Attending an approved educational activity |
| B | Off-Site Educational Activity | No | Yes | Yes | Attending a place other than the school | Attending an approved educational activity |
| C1 | Regulated Performance | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| M | Medical Or Dental Appointment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| J1 | Employment/Educational Interview | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| S | Study Leave | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| X | Non-Compulsory School Age | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Not a possible attendance |
| C2 | Temporary Reduced Timetable | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| D | Dual Registered At Another School | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Not a possible attendance |
| C | Leave Of Absence Granted By The School | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Leave of absence | Authorized absence |
| T | Traveller Absence | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Other authorised reasons | Authorized absence |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|-----|-----|---|---------------------------|
| R | Religious Observance | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Other authorised reasons | Authorized absence |
| I | Illness | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Other authorised reasons | Authorized Absence |
| E | Excluded But No Alternative Provision Made | Yes | Yes | Yes | Absent – Other authorised reasons | Authorized Absence |
| Q | Lack of Access Arrangements by LA | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y1 | Normal Transport Unavailable | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y2 | Widespread Travel Disruption | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y3 | Part of School Out of Use | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y4 | Session Cancelled - School Closed | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y5 | Subject to Sentence of Detention | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y6 | Infection or Disease | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | Not a possible attendance |
| Y7 | Other Unavoidable Cause | Yes | No | Yes | Absent – Unable to attend school | Not a possible attendance |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | | because of unavoidable cause | |
| G | Holiday Not Granted Or In Excess | Yes | Yes | No | Absent – Unauthorised Absence | Unauthorised absence |
| N | Reason For Absence Not Yet Provided | Yes | Yes | No | Absent – Unauthorised Absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Absent Without Authorisation | Yes | Yes | No | Absent – Unauthorised Absence | Unauthorised absence |
| U | Arrived In School After Registration Closed | Yes | Yes | No | Absent – Unauthorised Absence | Unauthorised absence |
| Z | Prospective Pupil Not On Admission Register | Yes | No | Yes | Administrative code | Administrative code |

APPENDIX C

Summary of Attendance Roles, Responsibilities and Key Principles

1. The Importance of Good Attendance

- Attendance is a fundamental part of the School's ethos and culture at St Edwards.
- Attendance directly supports pupil achievement, wellbeing, behaviour, and safeguarding.
- High expectations for attendance and punctuality are set for all pupils and communicated regularly to parents and pupils.
- Attendance is an ongoing focus that requires continuous monitoring and updating of strategies, we do this by regularly reviewing the attendance registers.
- Unexplained or frequent absences can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns, including neglect or exploitation.

2. School Responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and ensure that it is embedded in all areas of school life. This is shared with parents at parents evening and celebrated at our annual prize giving celebration.
- Communicate expectations consistently and proactively with parents to address issues of non-attendance or lateness.
- Record, track, and analyse attendance data accurately and use it to inform early intervention and support strategies.
- Respond to attendance concerns proportionately, referencing safeguarding and behaviour policies.

3. Staff Responsibilities

Senior Attendance Champion (SAC):

Champion attendance improvement at a leadership level

- Set a clear vision and oversee attendance systems.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance data and school strategies.
- Communicate key attendance messages to pupils and parents.

Designated Attendance Staff:

- Maintain accurate attendance records and follow school register routines.
- Investigate unexplained absences and obtain formal explanations.
- Identify trends or patterns in individual pupil attendance and inform the SAC.
- Consistently address lateness and consider appropriate sanctions.
- Communicate with pupils and parents regarding attendance concerns.

All Staff:

- Understand the significance of good attendance and communicate this in interactions with pupils and families.
- Participate in ongoing training relevant to their role in attendance management.

4. Monitoring Attendance

- Conduct regular analysis of individual and cohort attendance data.
- Use findings to provide support and inform interventions.
- Share attendance data with relevant school governors and leadership.

- Benchmark data to identify areas needing improvement.
- Review and evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and initiatives.

5. Pupil Responsibilities

- Attend school daily and on time for every scheduled lesson.
- Remain on site unless permission has been granted to leave.
- Engage with attendance systems and explain absences where required.
- Understand consequences of poor attendance, which may include:
- Support offers to overcome barriers.
- Communication with parents.
- Referral to external agencies.
- Sanctions in line with school policies.
- Speak to a trusted staff member if facing challenges affecting attendance.

6. Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

- Support will be tailored to pupils with SEND, mental health issues, or social/emotional challenges.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with disabilities.
- For pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, the school will liaise with local authorities when attendance concerns arise.
- Early help or external referrals may be considered where barriers lie outside the school's control.

7. Parent / Carer Responsibilities

- Legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance.
- Expected to communicate reasons for absence and engage with school efforts to support attendance.
- Must comply with the parent contract, including attendance clauses.
- Failure to do so may be deemed a breach of contract or unreasonable conduct.

8. Staff Training

- All staff receive induction and regular refresher training on attendance policy and procedures.

Staff with specific attendance duties receive additional training, including:

- Legal obligations and register requirements.
- Working with external agencies.
- Interpreting attendance data.
- Supporting pupils to overcome common barriers to attendance.