

# Attendance and Punctuality

To inform us of an absence please call: 01428 351013

Attendance officer – Mrs Michelle Mitchell



We are committed at St Georges to ensuring that all children have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. Regular attendance at school is one of the biggest factors in achieving this. School gives your child the opportunity to:

- Learn new things and develop many skills;
- Achieve potential and fulfil aspirations;
- Increase confidence and self-esteem;
- Make lots of friends, improve social skills and feel included.

If a child misses a lot of school they are likely to:-

- Have problems keeping up with school work and get poor test results;
- Lose interest in learning and dislike school more;
- Lose their place in friendship groups and be isolated from peers.

The national expectation for attendance at school is 96% and studies show that children with very poor attendance do not achieve as well as their peers with good attendance. In schools with an average absence of fewer than 7.5 days per pupil, 87.5% reach age related expectation at Key Stage 2. Where average absence is more than 15 days, only 62.1% achieve age related expectation.

### **90% Attendance**

An attendance record of 90% might seem good, but if a child only attends school 90% of the time, this is equivalent to missing half a day each week - over a whole school year your child would miss four weeks (20 days) of lessons. If 90% attendance was maintained for the whole time your child is at school, your child would miss a whole school year!

### **80% Attendance**

While an 80% attendance might seem acceptable, if a child only attends school 80% of the time, this is equivalent to missing a day each week - over a whole school year your child would miss eight weeks (40 days) of lessons.

### **Persistent absenteeism**

A child whose attendance falls below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee regardless of the reason for the absences. The school will contact families by letter to share any concerns; if there is no improvement families will be asked to attend a meeting with Michelle Mitchell (Attendance Officer) and Julie Craven (Emotional Well-being Practitioner) to discuss the issue. If there is still no improvement a meeting will be arranged with Louise Oddy (Headteacher).

### **When your child is absent**

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given. Absences fall into two main categories: authorised and unauthorised. Only the school can authorise absence. Whenever your child is absent from school you should:

- Contact school on the first day of absence and provide a date of expected return to school. If no notification of absence is received the absence will be recorded as unauthorised;
- Where possible let the school know in advance if your child will be absent eg medical appointments. Make sure your child attends before and/or after the appointment. If

there is not time to come into school before the appointment, please ring the office and let us know if they need a school dinner;

- Where possible make medical/dental appointments out of school hours.

### **If your child is feeling unwell**

If your child is feeling slightly unwell they can still come into school, let the teacher know and we will keep a close eye on them. If we feel your child is no longer well enough to remain in school we will contact you immediately. We can also arrange to give medication to children during the school day; please ask the office for a consent form.

If your child is not well enough to attend (high temperature, vomiting and/or diarrhoea) please contact the office on the first day. If your child does not return on the date expected please contact the school office to update us.

When a child is ill these are known as “authorised absences”. However repeated absences due to illness may be referred to the School Nurse and/or parents may be requested to obtain medical evidence such as prescriptions, appointment cards etc. which shows that the illness is being supported by a doctor. It would also be useful for the school to understand any health related matters which may be affecting your child’s school attendance. If parents are unable to justify regular absences with medical evidence, further absences will also be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Office.

### **Absence and the Law**

By law, parents/carers are committing an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Where there are repeated unauthorised absences and families fail to work with the school to improve the situation, legal action may be taken and families may be fined.

Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery;
- Going shopping or for a haircut;
- Going for a family day out;
- Because it is your child’s birthday;
- Sleeping in after a late night;
- Unapproved holidays;
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

The school does not authorise holidays in school time. Families can be fined £60 per week, per pupil, per parent for taking holidays in term time with further penalties for non-payment. If you feel you have an exceptional circumstance please speak to Michelle Mitchell or Louise Oddy prior to making any arrangements or taking any absence. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **Arriving late to school**

When a child arrives late to school it can be very disruptive to your child, the teacher and other children in the class. Regular lateness also has a significant impact on a child's learning as they are missing out on vital parts of their literacy or numeracy lessons. If your child arrives late to school they must come to the school office so they can be marked as present in the register and a reason given for their lateness.

- 5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
- 10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
- 15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
- 20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
- 30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

## **Supporting your child**

Parents and carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school:

- Maintain good habits of arriving at school on time;
- Inform the school on the first day of any illness or absence;
- Ensure your child only misses school for genuine reasons;
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- Read all letters their children bring home from school and check the newsletter page on the website;
- Talk to the school about any difficulties you may be experiencing.

## **As a school we shall:**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, texts and letters as soon as possible. If we are unable to contact you we may make a home visit;
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance;
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report;
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and discuss how school can support you in improving this;
- Every child has the legal right to an education so if we continue to have concerns and issues are not resolved we will have to consider further action such as fining.

If you are having difficulties in getting your child to school regularly, or you would like to discuss any health related matters, please contact Michelle Mitchell who will be happy to discuss any support we can offer.