

# Attendance Policy

## 2022 - 2023

### St Matthias CE Primary School



**Approved and Adopted by Governors: Spring 2023**

**Review date: Autumn 2023**

**Person Responsible: Mrs Ginnie Beale**

This policy is currently under review. The updated version has been referred to the Trust Board of Directors and is waiting formal approval and ratification.

In collaboration with



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## Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on schools to make arrangements for its pupils and states that:

*“proprietors/governors of independent schools (which include Academies and Free schools) must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.”*

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE July 2018 updated in July 2022) requires all schools to follow the procedure for protecting children from abuse. This Attendance Policy was written with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) which defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and ☐ taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding children is consequently more than contributing to the protection of individual children and the school is committed to the development of policy and practice that supports children, and their families to be safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, contribute positively and achieve economic wellbeing.

The Spire Educational Trust strives to promote the welfare of our pupils by:

1. Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment
2. Identifying child welfare concerns and taking appropriate action
3. Using the curriculum to enable our children to develop keep safe strategies
4. Operating safe recruitment and selection procedures to prevent unsuitable people working with our children.

It also states that “Governing bodies and proprietors should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risk of them going missing in future.”

This policy also follows the DfE guidance [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance](#) (Jan 2015) which states that “Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance. Local authorities, police constables,

school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices. This means that while the guidance does not have the force of law, there is an expectation that it will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.”

This policy also follows the DfE guidance ‘Working together to Improve School Attendance’ (May 22) which states that improving school attendance is everyone’s business. It acknowledges that barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. It recognises that in order to improve school attendance that it is imperative that schools can work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The school policies including this attendance policy are designed to meet these needs and are available on request or via the school website. This policy applies mostly to points 1 and 3 above and reflects current legislation, accepted best practice and complies with government guidance.

## 1. Introduction

St. Matthias CE Primary School recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to realise their full potential. Children in England and Wales are required by law to attend school for just 190 days out of 365 each year. These days are organised into six periods or three terms, which leaves families with 13 weeks of designated holiday and an additional 5 days when school is closed for staff to undertake Training Days.

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

For the purpose of this policy the definition of a parent is:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; or,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

*St Matthias has two parental information leaflets explaining school attendance which is available from the school office; ‘School Attendance, Legal Information for Parents and Carers’ and ‘St Matthias School Attendance Leaflet.’*

## 2. Why Regular Attendance is so Important

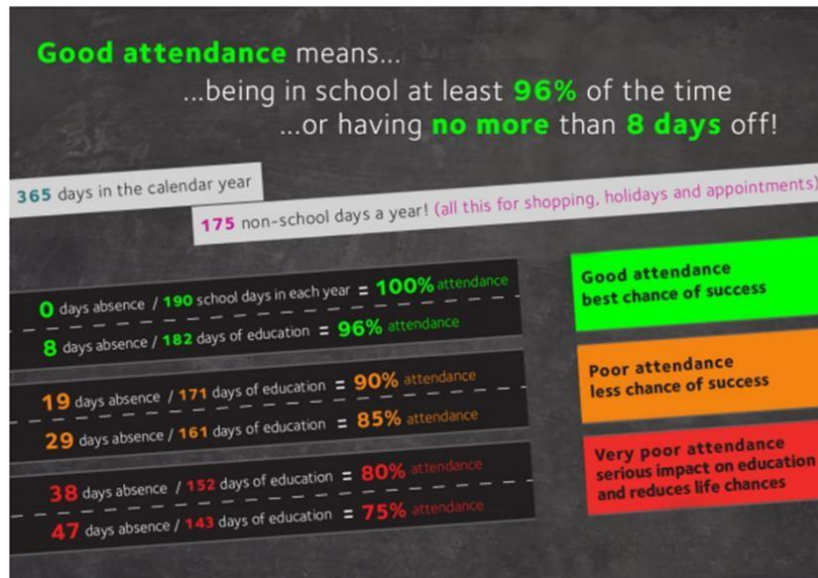
**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. (See *appendix 1*)

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child is paramount. Therefore, failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding concern.



Our aim is to encourage every pupil to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

We will achieve this by;

- Supporting pupils and their parents/carers in our establishment in achieving the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Fostering a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community; staff, parents and children
- Providing a framework with agreed roles and responsibilities
- Developing positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information
- Providing support and guidance for parents and pupils
- Promoting and rewarding pupils' successes and achievements
- Providing a safe and secure environment for children so they wish to be in school
- Challenging and reducing levels of authorised and unauthorised absence
- Promoting effective partnerships with the Educational Welfare Service and other agencies

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

<b>100%</b>	<b>Perfect</b> – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give your child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic for their future.
<b>96-99.9%</b>	<b>Good</b> – Well done - strive to build on this.
<b>90- 95.9%</b>	<b>Concerning</b> – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. The Education Welfare Officer [EWO] will monitor reasons for all absences with school administrator and Deputy Headteacher. You may be required to attend meetings and work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
<b>Below 90%</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b> – Absence <b>IS</b> causing <b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b> . It <b>IS</b> affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] to improve your child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not necessarily assess all reasons as 'valid'. See Appendix 1 for authorised and unauthorised codes.

### 3. Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must legally be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school late to get a late 'l' mark before 9.10am or 'u' mark after 9.10am
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

It is recognised that any child may be off school, provided school has been notified, because they are ill. However, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Instead contact should be made initially with the Class Teacher or school office. (see the school's [Early Help offer](#) and [Behaviour for Learning and Positive Relationships Policy](#) as these outline how school can support.)

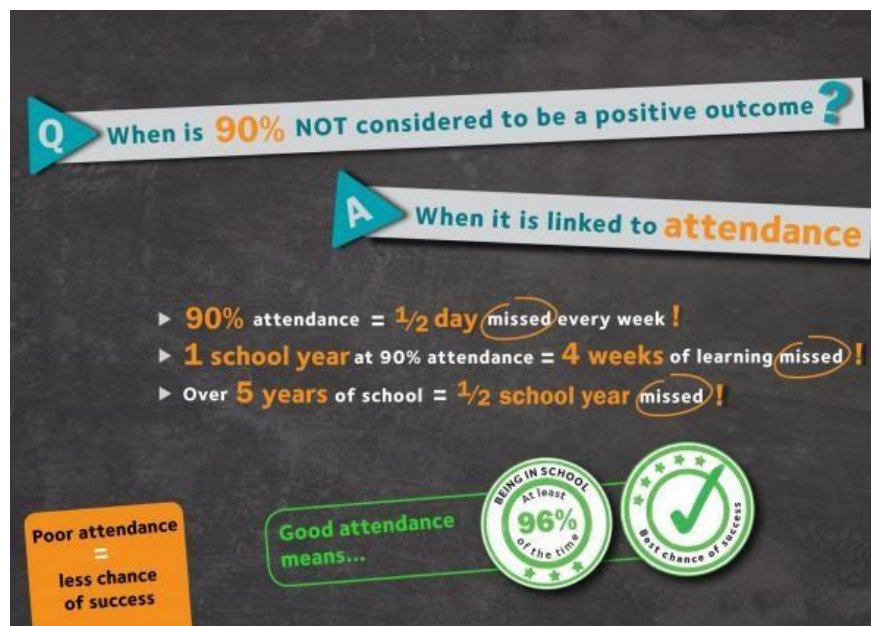
### 4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Where appropriate, additional support may be offered for some children with a view to tackling any barriers to good attendance.



## 5. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Telephone the school office by **9.30am** and speak to the office staff or leave a message on the first day of absence.
- Unless the date of return is known, please update the school office on a daily basis.
- For long term illnesses we may require a weekly update dependent on the illness.

If your child is absent we may:

- Telephone, email or text on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; ☐ Conduct a welfare visit\* to the home if we have not heard from you for two days.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the school Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance if attendance doesn't improve or continues to cause concerns.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the class teacher, or most appropriate staff, in resolving any problems together (ClassDojo is the preferred way to make initial contact with the class teacher.) This is nearly always successful. It relies upon a positive relationship between school and the parent. If difficulties cannot be sorted out, or there is a lack of engagement in the supportive processes and procedures offered by school and unauthorised absences persist, the school may refer the child to the **Local Authority Education Welfare Officer who may issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.** Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

*\* 2 members of staff visiting the home to ensure that the child is 'safe and well' – dependant on staff capacity.*

## 6. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Did you know that being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school over the year. Lateness is just as serious as non-attendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:50 am and we expect your child to be on school premises at 8:45am

If your child arrives after 8:50 am, they will receive a late mark on the electronic signing in system.

At 9.10am the registers will be closed. In accordance with Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a late mark on the electronic system that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, more than 2 late marks, you will receive a letter from the attendance officer, this will be monitored for 2 weeks and you may be asked to meet with the attendance officer if the problem continues. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## **7. Absence in Term Time including Holidays**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Government regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a term time holiday. **Headteachers are not allowed** to grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays **unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

In **exceptional circumstances**, pupils may be granted leave of absence during term time for **not more than one week (5 school days) in any calendar year**. If you wish to make an application for a planned absence **please obtain a form from reception**. The form should be completed and forwarded to the school **not less than six weeks before** the planned absence is due to begin.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours
- Compassionate leave in some circumstances

Where the application for planned absence has been submitted within the timeframe, all carers with 'Parental Responsibility' will be notified in writing of the decision.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may **parents may be fined by means of a Penalty Notice or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Courts by the Local Authority**

## **8. Medical Appointments and Illness**

From time to time children need to be absent from school for medical appointments or illness.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Medical appointments at a doctor or dentist surgery are often of a short duration and children should only be away from the school for a minimal amount of time. Even hospital and specialist appointments usually only take up part of a day. School should be informed of all such absences in advance and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment. An appointment card from the doctor or dentist or a letter from the hospital, or the prescription medication is required to be shown to the school office. If it is necessary for a child to be

out of school for this reason, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time required for the appointment and should be taken out of school just prior to the appointment and returned to school directly afterwards.

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. If your child is absent due to vomiting and / or diarrhoea they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last time that the child is ill. As a school we refer to [Health England](#) guidance to assist us in making decisions about an illness; otherwise a “common sense” approach is used and we expect parents and staff to make sensible judgments about whether a child suffering from a common illness is well enough to be in school, This is to reduce the risk of infection passing to other children and adults at the school. If the illness continues for more than a week, we ask that parents keep us updated every Monday.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer by 10am by text, email or telephone call if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence. This is to check on the safety of the child. If there is no response to the text messages, office staff or the deputy head will try to contact the parents by phone.

## **8. Arrival and Registration**

The school is opened at 8.45am. Children are encouraged to go straight into class on arrival and should be ready to start their learning from 8.50am promptly. The register is taken twice a day, at 8.55am and 12.55pm. A day counts as 2 attendance marks. Morning registration ends at 9.10am. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she must report to the school office with a parent or carer and register using our electronic sign in system. This will record their arrival time and reason and reason for lateness. Arrival after 9.10am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark “U”.



## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Headteacher Deputy Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational management of the policy</li> <li>Consider requests for authorised absence. Give approval in advance in appropriate circumstances</li> <li>Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted</li> <li>Ensure that anti-bullying and behaviour policies are followed and ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported and [e.g. bullying/behaviour] which impact on attendance</li> <li>Record concerns relating to attendance on CPOMS and hold meetings with parents</li> <li>Include attendance information and important reminders on the newsletters which is emailed to each family.</li> <li>Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or lateness □ Complete HT witness statements on pupil absence for court use □ Promote and reward good attendance through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly Class Attendance certificate – class with the highest attendance</li> <li>Reward Termly Individual Attendance certificates for those with 100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with 100% for the month- entered into a prize draw for £10 Argos Voucher</li> <li>Children with 100% for the term- entered into a prize draw for £10 Argos Voucher</li> <li>Children with 100% for the year- entered into a prize draw for £10 Argos Voucher</li> </ul> </li> <li>All Children with 100% attendance for the year receive GOLD certificate</li> <li>Promote good attendance in whole school worship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Attendance Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Print weekly registers in case of IT breakdown</li> <li>Send a text to parents, by 10am when first day of absence if contact has not been made by parents.</li> <li>Accurately record attendance data daily using agreed codes</li> <li>Record late arrival, log time of arrival and record reasons if given on SIMS</li> <li>Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded on SIMS</li> <li>Prepare standard letters requesting reasons for absence when this is unexplained</li> <li>Prepare letters/ texts/emails to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored</li> <li>Inform parents of their child's attendance at regular points during the year through text and certificates.</li> <li>Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence</li> <li>Liaise with the Headteacher and update regularly information linked to attendance monitoring and take agreed action</li> <li>Provide attendance reports when requested and ensure DfE attendance returns are accurate □ Update the newsletter weekly with the attendance % per class and school.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities of ensuring their child attends school</li> <li>Ensure their child attends every day unless they are genuinely ill</li> <li>Ensure their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day</li> <li>Ensure they contact the school on the first day of any absence by email or phone call and regular updates every Monday for a serious illness.</li> <li>Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details</li> <li>Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school</li> <li>If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to improve matters</li> <li>Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence □ Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates using the correct form.</li> <li>Provide medical evidence of illness when required by the school (ie if child's attendance drops below 90%)</li> </ul>
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend school every day</li> <li>Attend school punctually</li> <li>Attend appropriately prepared for the day (ie; PE kit, reading bags, etc)</li> </ul>
Education Welfare Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work closely with school and families to resolve attendance issues</li> <li>Visit school for meetings at agreed times</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, with school, cases of unauthorised absence which necessitate action and advise on responses</li> </ul> <p>□ Provide written reports to school in the form of consultation sheets</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse trends in attendance data to identify appropriate action</li> <li>Investigate reasons for absence exploring any underlying cause either at home or in school □ Complete regular register checks</li> <li>On receipt of a written referral, take appropriate action, which may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ advice on strategies to improve attendance</li> <li>✓ assessment home visits</li> <li>✓ action planning</li> <li>✓ agreed time-limited intervention</li> <li>✓ attendance at school meetings</li> <li>✓ written record of work undertaken</li> <li>✓ verbal feedback where appropriate</li> <li>✓ written response to referral within 10 days</li> <li>✓ liaise with other agencies</li> <li>✓ onward referral to other agencies</li> <li>✓ liaison with other Local Authority departments</li> <li>✓ preparation of cases for prosecution including sending warning letters</li> <li>✓ preparing Witness Statements for Magistrates Court</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a welcome atmosphere</li> <li>Provide a safe learning environment</li> <li>Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable learning for all children</li> <li>Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions by five past 9am and five past 1pm.</li> <li>Alert the attendance secretary of any children who demonstrate an unsettled pattern of attendance or whose attendance pattern changes.</li> <li>Build positive relationships with children and parents and encourage good school attendance.</li> <li>Save registers on class PC immediately after registration</li> <li>Report percentage attendance at parent consultations; encourage regular punctual attendance; work to secure regular punctual attendance</li> <li>Ensure all absence notes are passed to the attendance secretary.</li> <li>Work with the SLT to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.</li> </ul>
Governing Body	<p><b><i>It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body holds responsibility for Attendance Policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures remain high. The Attendance Policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.</i></b></p>

## **10. Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

## Appendix 1: The importance of good attendance.

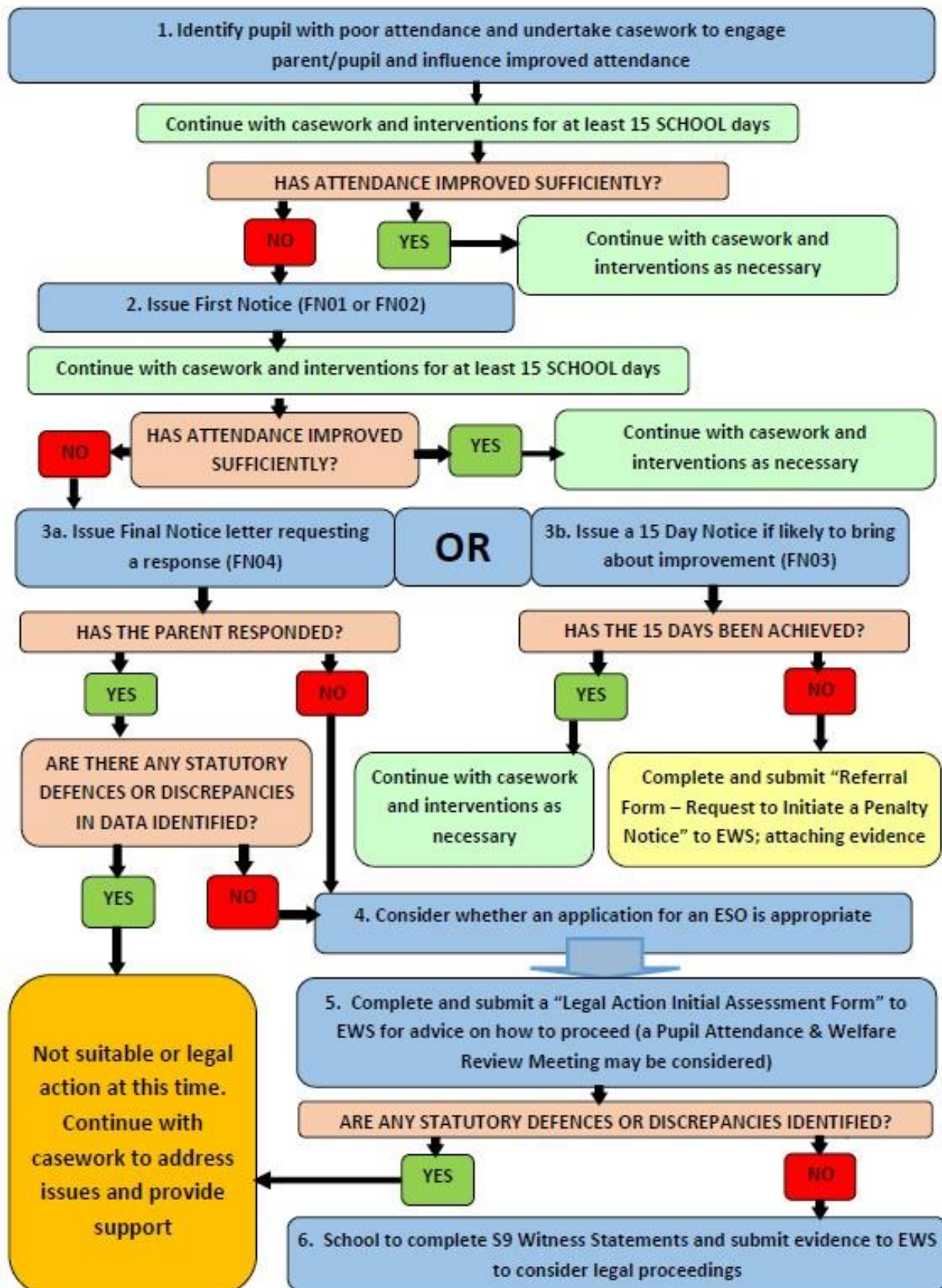
This chart will be used in conjunction with appendix 2- Attendance flow chart

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent in year	Which is approximately this many weeks	Which means this many lessons missed	Action
100%	0 days	0 weeks	0 lessons	<b>Perfect</b> – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give your child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic for their future. <i>Entered into the 100% prize draws!</i>
96%-99%	No more than 8 days	Up to 1 ½ Weeks	No more than 37 lessons	<b>Good</b> – Well done - strive to build on this.
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons	<b>Less chance of success, gaps in learning.</b>  Attendance is closely monitored. Awareness letter sent home informing child has fallen below school target %
90-94.9%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons	<b>Concerning</b> – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school and known as <b>Persistent Absence</b> . The Education Welfare Officer [EWO] will monitor reasons for all absences with school administrator and Headteacher. You may be required to attend meetings and work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons	<b>Unacceptable</b> – Absence <b>IS</b> causing <b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b> . It <b>IS</b> affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] to improve your child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not necessarily assess all reasons as 'valid'. See Appendix 3 for authorised and unauthorised codes  Next steps dependent on improvement, situation and engagement. Parents invited to attend meeting. Attendance flow chart will be used for next steps regarding notice to improve, 15 day warning or prosecution.
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons	

NB – Although percentages monitored, sudden changes in attendance or patterns are raised as an attendance concern to allow early intervention. This is a guide and any actions taken will be dependent on individual circumstances.

## Appendix 2: Case Work for Irregular Attendance

### Case Work for Irregular Attendance



### **Appendix 3: Authorised / Unauthorised Absence from School**

‘Authorised Absence’ means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:- **Code B:** Educated off site

**Code C:** Leave of absence authorised by the school - Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. **Code D:** Dual Registration

**Code E:** Excluded but no alternative provision made. - If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

**Code H:** Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion.

**Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors’ notes.

**Code L:** Late before registers closed

**Code M:** Medical or dental appointments - Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of 11 school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code P:** Approved sporting activity

**Code R:** Religious observance - Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents’ religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code T:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. - A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

**Code V:** Educational visit or trip.

**Code X:** For non-compulsory school age children not expected in school.

#### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:- **Code G:** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N:** Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil’s absence. When the reason for the pupil’s absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil’s attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O:** Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

#### **Appendix 4: Request for Leave of Absence Form**

Parents can obtain this form from the school office.

### **REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FORM**

This is an application for a leave of absence during term time from St Matthias Church of England Primary School.

We expect parents to complete this form for any event which requires time off school; ie. Funerals, weddings, graduations, ballet exams, music exam, 11+ exam, participating in sporting events, participating/acting in theatre productions and holidays.

#### **Legal Background**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Only in exceptional circumstances may an amount of leave be granted in any academic year.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent or carer in respect of each child who is absent from school.

If a Penalty Notice is not issued, your child's attendance will still be monitored and this, along with any further unauthorised absences will be discussed with you and could lead to legal action being taken under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

In September 2013, the Department for Education stated that parents would no longer be entitled to take their children on holiday in school time, except in exceptional circumstances. The government set a target of 96% attendance for every child; which indicates that they expect no more than seven days absence for any child during the school year. Schools are unable to authorise any term time holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

#### **Applying for Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Applications should be made using the attached form at least one week in advance of the proposed dates whenever possible. (Parents are advised to apply for leave of absence before they confirm any holiday arrangements.)

The school considers that all absences from school disrupt the child's learning and their classroom friendships. Therefore absences should only be due to genuine illness.

Parents will be informed, in writing of the outcome of your request for leave of absence.

Thank you for being honest and completing the form.

Mrs V. Beale – Headteacher.

## REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FORM

<b>To The Headteacher &amp; Chair of Governors</b>		<b>Year</b>	<b>School Office Use ONLY</b> <b>Child's Attendance %</b>	
			<b>Last Academic Year</b>	<b>This Academic Year</b>
<b>Child's Name/s</b>				

**Dates for which leave of absence is requested**

From/On:

To:

Number of School Days .....

Where is the child going exactly? – Please put TOWN in UK OR COUNTRY if going abroad.

Has your child previously been granted a requested absence during this school year?    **YES / NO**

If **YES** please give dates of that absence ..... Number of School Days .....

Please give the reasons which prevent this event happening during a school holiday.

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(If you wish you may attach a separate letter to support your request.)

Signed ..... (parent/guardian)

Date form completed .....

### FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Child/ren will be sitting SAT's during this school year.    **YES / NO**

Other relevant information .....

Leave of absence    **approved** /    **NOT approved**

(delete as appropriate)

Signed ..... Chair of Governors / Headteacher

Date .....