

Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy

**Principal:
L. Davis**



Attendance Policy 2023-2024

If you would like this translated in another language, please contact the school office.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

To be read in conjunction with the full SBMAT Attendance Policy available on our website

Rationale

To ensure that all pupils at Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy reach their full potential and get the best from their education, every pupil needs to attend school regularly.

Regular school attendance is a legal requirement and when a pupil begins their journey at Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy, we ask parents/carers to work with us to achieve good or excellent attendance for their child or children.

Policy and Procedures

The school and the Local Authority will continue to work closely together to ensure that parent/carers meet their responsibility. Attendance issues are dealt with initially by the school and is then followed by a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), through VIP Education Welfare Services, if attendance has not improved and/or further advice is required. The Education Welfare Service (EWS/VIP) can provide an important link between school and families, provide support/advice to families where needed, but can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

To further support the Attendance Policy, we:-

- Have clear registration procedures to encourage positive attitudes towards attendance and punctuality and to identify pupils at risk of meeting attendance targets.
- Work with parents/carers to support any of our families with their well-being and any difficulties that may impact upon their child's attendance by enlisting partner agency support where appropriate, for example EWO, the School Nurse, Home School Links Worker.
- Support learning and positive attitudes to behaviour by investigating the barriers to good attendance through 'Attendance Clinics' with the EWO.
- Have developed attendance procedures and supportive systems, to ensure that there is consistency in line with this Attendance Policy.
- Undertake analysis of patterns of absence via regular register checks and half termly attendance reports which are reported to our Local Governing Committee.
- Ask the parents/carers to ensure that up to date contact telephone numbers and any change of address is forwarded to the school office.

School Attendance

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, which is vital for children to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that Belgrave offers. Absence from school can affect attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes for pupils.

If your child/children are ill, then please contact the school office as soon as possible to inform the school (this may not automatically authorise your child's absence, if their attendance has already dropped below 95% - please see below). ***Please note that members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or the Home School Links Worker may conduct a home visit if pupils have been absent from school and we have not received a message as to the reason why and we have not been able to make contact with a parents/carers.***

If your child is absent for **more than 5 school days through illness**, we will request that medical evidence is provided.

In line with government targets, we aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 95%. If a child's attendance drops below 95% the following steps may be taken:

- 1) A conversation will take place with the parent/carer(s) by the class teacher, to make them aware of the drop in attendance and to have a discussion around the reasons for this.
- 2) If the child has had more 3 or more days of absence during the Autumn term, a letter will be sent home to inform parents of the impact on their attendance and progress.
- 3) If the child's attendance continues to fall and they have had more 2 or more blocks of absence, parent/carer(s) will be invited to an 'Attendance Clinic' meeting in school to meet with the EWO and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – Mrs Birchall, Vice Principal. This meeting is designed to be supportive and to further discuss how we can work together to ensure good attendance is now achieved from this point onwards. If a school meeting is unable to be arranged, then a further phone call may be made or a doorstep visit from the EWO and member of SLT.
- 4) Following the attendance clinic/phone call/visit, it may have been advised that medical evidence may now be required for any future absences. Without medical evidence, further absences will be unauthorised using the 'O' code in the register. Evidence could include; appointment cards/texts or dated medicines – in the child/children's name and appropriately dated.
- 5) If any further unauthorised absences occur, this could result in a fixed penalty notice warning letter being issued by the school in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- 6) If attendance still fails to improve once the penalty notice warning letter has been sent, parents may be issued with a fixed penalty fine and/or statutory legal action may be taken.

Leave of absence during term-time

An important point to note is that we will not be authorising any extended leave for the 2023/2024 academic year. This is intended to keep pupils in school as much as possible following the disruptions of previous academic years.

The procedures surrounding the leave of absence will be reviewed at the end of the summer term 2024, in preparation for the start of the academic year September 2024.

However, parent/carer(s) **must still apply for a leave of absence** during term time to ensure that the correct absence code is used for a child/children's absence.

Not completing a form does not avoid the absence being unauthorised, or a fixed penalty fine of £60 per pupil, per parent being issued if the absence from school is longer than 5 school days.

Parents/carers must please work with the school and follow the steps as listed below:

- 1) An '**Application for leave of absence form during term time**' must be completed where possible, **at least four weeks before** the potential absence, which is available for download from the school website or from the school office.
- 2) **A meeting must be arranged** to see or speak with a member of SLT and the EWO to discuss the **potential** leave of absence. Please do this via telephoning the school office (01782 486341).

During the meeting/conversation a number of factors will be discussed, including;

- The impact on achievement the absence could have.

- **That pupils will be taken off roll after 20 school days of absence** and would then need to re-apply for a place at this school, should a place still be available. Please note that pupil places have been lost due to extended leaves of absence exceeding 20 days.
- That the EWO (in accordance with the Local Authority) may issue **a Fixed Penalty Fine if more than 5 days of unauthorised absence has occurred.**

3) The planned absence will not be authorised and this will be made clear on the on the **'Application for leave of absence form'** by a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team.

4) **A referral form may then be completed for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued at £60 per pupil per parent for any leave exceeding 5 days.**

Religious observance

As a school we recognise our diverse community and in accordance with guidance provided from the Local Authority, we will authorise 1 day per religious observance (with an 'R' code) i.e. Eid. **Any further days of absence directly before or after the designated religious observance day will automatically be unauthorised by the school.** Please note that both authorised and unauthorised affect your child's attendance percentage, however, unauthorised absences can potentially result in further action being taken by the Education Welfare Service.

Class Registers

1. Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate class attendance register (other adults such as Teaching Assistants may complete the register under the teacher's direction).
2. Registers must be completed using the electronic 'Arbor' system and any amendments (i.e. a 'late' mark) will be completed by the school office.
3. The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and the beginning of the afternoon. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Absences will only be authorised by the school when an explanation has been given by parent/carer(s) **(e.g. 'I01' for illness)**. Explanation must be in person, by telephone or speaking directly to the staff in the school office on the first day of absence.
4. Correct codes for recording attendance/absence are set out in each register.
5. Pupil attendance at school is 2 sessions per day. Morning (am) is counted as one session and afternoon (pm) is counted as another session. **All registers to be taken and saved by 8.55am for all year groups.**

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has the responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting concerns through regular review meetings with the Home School Links Worker and EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

Punctuality and Late Clinics

Any children arriving after the doors and gates have closed will need to be brought to the main school office by a parent or carer, who will sign them in. The child or children will be marked as 'late' (L), any children arriving after the registers close (9.00am) will be marked as an 'unauthorised late' (U) which equates to half a day of absence. These codes can affect pupils overall attendance percentage for the academic year and if a number of 'U' codes are accumulated, then the EWO will be notified and legal action may be taken in line with Local Authority guidance.

Our Home School Links Worker (Miss Middleton) conducts daily punctuality/late gates and will speak with parents/carers as to the reasons why a child or children are late. Miss Middleton will also analyse 'late mark' reports from our Arbor registers to build a picture of punctuality across the school and/or with individual children. If a child is consistently late, the following steps and procedures will be followed:

- Parents/carers will be invited by letter to a 'Late Clinic' meeting, and this will be conducted by Miss Middleton, on a Thursday morning.
 - 1st invite letter to Late Clinic will be sent.
 - If the 1st Late Clinic meeting is non-attended by the parent/carer, Miss Middleton will call initially to remind and invite them in that morning. Then a 2nd invite letter will be sent and followed up with a phone call to reiterate the meeting.
 - If the 2nd Late Clinic meeting is non-attended, an initial call will be made again. Then parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Clinic meeting with the EWO, Vice Principal (Mrs Birchall) and Miss Middleton (these take place on Tuesday mornings).
- **Persistent late marks can affect a pupil's attendance and can result in further action being taken by the Education Welfare Service, i.e. fixed penalty warning letters and/or fines.**
- If there is still little or no improvement with regards to punctuality (a further 1-2 weeks), then another Attendance Clinic meeting will be held, now with the school Principal present, as well as the EWO and Miss Middleton.
- The final step if punctuality still remains an issue and there has been little or no improvement, further action will then unfortunately need to be taken by the Education Welfare Service and in line with Local Authority guidance. This is something that we would clearly wish to avoid and we would make every effort to work with parents/carers in the first instance, which is evident in the steps that would have already been taken and as noted above.

Recording absence and punctuality

Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy clearly differentiates between authorised and non-authorised absence. An absence is only authorised when the reason can be seen as a genuine explanation of the absence.

Every half term the school is required to submit details of Persistent Absence to the EWO/VIP. We are required to inform them of how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absences. Children are classed as Persistent Absentees if their attendance is below 90%. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

Appointments

All medical, dental and other appointments must be made out of school time. In order to reduce the amount of adults on site we ask that medical/dental appointments are NOT made in school time. This way, the children's learning is not disrupted and we do not have any more adults on site than is absolutely necessary. Please note that if this happens it may affect your child's attendance figure and in some cases may be noted as unauthorised if evidence is not provided (i.e. a hospital letter or appropriately prescribed medication).

Celebrating Attendance

We recognise the importance of acknowledging and celebrating good attendance however we also do not penalise children who have been unable to attend due to medical conditions, illness, or other exceptional circumstances. We also value where attendance has shown sustained improvement over time. The Academy will acknowledge excellent attendance and punctuality / improvement in attendance / punctuality in the following ways:

Class Attendance Celebration: Once a week the attendance records of each class are celebrated and a class reward given

Termly Attendance Celebration: At the end of each term the attendance record of individual children is celebrated with 'Knutton Star Prizes'. Throughout the term, children collect stars, one every time they arrive on time. At the end of the term, prizes are laid out for children to collect – the bigger their attendance, the bigger the prize!

The Home-school link worker will also send out postcards/well-done cards regularly throughout the term to celebrate improvements or maintaining attendance so that children are encouraged regularly.

The Academy will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

The following forms part of this policy:

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child will attend every session unless there is a genuine illness.
- **It is essential that parents/carers also agree to contact school with a reason for their child's absence on the day of absence (and each day thereafter).** This is extremely important to ensure that the correct code is entered into the register for that child/children. If a reason is not provided, the absence will be noted on the register as unauthorised and home visits may take place if we have not been able to make contact with the parents/carers of that pupil or pupils.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents/carers may be contacted by the Home School Links Worker, a member of SLT or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for absence and any support that is required and deemed necessary.
- Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in order for these absences to be authorised. Evidence will be requested until attendance exceeds 90%.

Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy will support parents/carers and pupils wherever possible to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Parents/carers are welcome to contact the school office, Mrs Birchall or Miss Middleton, if they have any attendance concerns or questions regarding attendance and/or this Attendance Policy.

Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024 *(or earlier if deemed necessary and according to guidance changes).*



The St. Bart's Academy Trust

Leave of Absence Request Form



Academy:

Knutton, St Mary's C of E Academy

Guidance Notes

- Parents are asked to consider very carefully the implications for their own child and others before making a decision to remove their child from the education that is provided in Academy term time. Children should only be removed in **exceptional circumstances**.
- If you intend for your child to be absent, please complete the form below and submit to the academy with **at least four weeks' notice**. (It is recognised that this timescale may not be possible when the absence request relates to Medical / Dental appointments or Compassionate Leave). Completing this form **does not** mean your request has been approved.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 state that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (see below).
- If your leave of absence is either approved and you fail to ensure that your child returns to school by the agreed date or your child takes leave when your leave of absence request is not approved, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' on the attendance register.
- For such 'unauthorised' absence, you may be liable to be issued with a penalty notice (fine). The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then you may be prosecuted. The school also reserves the right to remove your child from the roll of the school. Where this happens, please be aware that it may not always be possible to re-admit your child to the Academy.

Exceptional circumstances: In considering whether any 'exceptional circumstances' apply, the Principal will consider if the reasons are **rare, significant, unavoidable** and **short**. The Principal will also take into consideration the factors listed below:

- Whether the event for which leave of absence is requested can reasonably take place during school holidays
- Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months
- Any leave of absence taken previously
- Whether the leave is during any statutory assessment period or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines
- Age and year group of the pupil

The Academy will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances, please note this list is not exhaustive:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of the desired accommodation
- An overlap at the beginning or end of the school term
- The working pattern or availability of parental holiday entitlement
- Attendance at a wedding or christening of an extended family member or friend
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from our Academies for holidays during term time. **If you take your child on holiday during term time you may be liable for a penalty notice being issued.**



The St. Bart's Academy Trust

Leave of Absence Request Form



Academy:	Knutton, St. Mary's C of E Academy
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Name of Child:		Class:	
Date of Absence(s):	From:	To:	Total number of days:

For appointments during the school day:

Time of Appointment:		Time child to be collected:		Time child will return:	
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Please tick the appropriate box for the type of absence and give the reason for this absence request below:

Medical/Dental appointment*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious Observance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit to another school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Occasion (please specify reasons below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compassionate Leave (please specify reasons below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you are taking your child out of school for a medical appointment, you will need to provide a copy of the appointment letter/text*

Reason for absence request:	
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I have considered the implications for both my child and others in making this decision.

Signed:		Date:	
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For Academy use:			
Child's Attendance level over the last 12 months:			%
Authorised	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unauthorised	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed:		Date:	

Appendix B – Letter One (A) – Initial Attendance Concerns

3 or more days absence during first half of the Autumn Term- Initial Attendance Concerns

Date

Dear xxx

As you are aware, we continue to work hard as an Academy to promote positive attendance. We monitor the attendance of every pupil daily and where attendance is showing any decrease, we are keen to work with parents to see if there are any further actions or support we can implement to improve attendance and prevent any further decline.

This is to inform you your child has been absent from school for 3 or more days this half term and we will continue to monitor this on a regular basis. If their attendance continues to fall, you may be invited to an attendance clinic with the Academy Attendance Officer.

Information regarding the number of days/weeks missed over the course of a school year is provided below. Please do not hesitate to discuss your child's attendance with their class teacher or contact me directly if you have any concerns you wish to discuss.

Pupils fall behind when they miss school – whether pupils are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

What does the attendance percentage really mean across a school year?

'PUPIL' Final Attendance for the year	Equal to days absent	Equal to weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

We would really appreciate your support in ensuring ***name of pupil*** attends school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix C – Letter One (B) – Initial Attendance Concerns

Attendance below 96% - Initial Attendance Concerns

Date

Dear xxx

As you are aware, we continue to work hard as an Academy to promote positive attendance. We monitor the attendance of every pupil daily and where attendance is showing any decrease, we are keen to work with parents to see if there are any further actions or support we can implement to improve attendance and prevent any further decline.

This is to inform you that **xxxx** been absent for **xxxx** days so far this academic year which equates to attendance of **xx**%.

Information regarding the number of days/weeks missed over the course of a school year is provided below. Please do not hesitate to discuss your child's attendance with their class teacher or contact me directly if you have any concerns you wish to discuss.

Pupils fall behind when they miss school – whether pupils are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

What does the attendance percentage really mean across a school year?

'PUPIL' Final Attendance for the year	Equal to days absent	Equal to weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

We would really appreciate your support in ensuring ***name of pupil*** attends school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix D – Letter Two – Decline in Attendance

Attendance below 90% or ongoing decline in attendance

Date

Dear xxx,

xxx Academy are committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim.

Unfortunately, following our **letter/meeting/discussion xxxxx's** attendance has not sufficiently improved. They currently have **xx** days absence which means that their attendance is **xx**%.

OR

This is to inform you that your child has been absent for **xx** days which means that their attendance is **xx**%.

We are concerned that these absences may impact on your child's learning, wellbeing and wider development.

We would therefore like to invite you to an Attendance Clinic on **date / time**. The meeting will be attended by **xxx**. It is really important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to **name of pupil** non-attendance can be discussed and appropriate support put in place to improve their attendance.

You are welcome to bring someone along to support you.

Please email or telephone us to confirm receipt of this letter and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting **xxxx, e-mail address and telephone number**.

Please be aware that the Local Authority will be informed of **name of pupil** current attendance.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix E – Letter Three – Medical Evidence Request

Date xx

Dear xxx

As you are aware, we continue to work hard as an Academy to promote positive attendance and improve pupil attendance levels.

Further to our **recent meeting in school/telephone conversation** regarding your child's attendance which is currently at % (or.....days) and in line with our Attendance Policy we will now require medical evidence for any future absences.

This can be in the form of a GP note, medical appointment card, dated and named prescribed medicines or a prescription. Please note the medical note, letter or card must be in the child's name.

We will no longer be in a position to authorise any absences without the above evidence.

In the meantime, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance in partnership with the Local Authority.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, or have any further questions, then please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix F – Letter Four – Attendance Improvement

Date xx

Dear xxx

Thank you for your support in ensuring that ***name of pupil*** attendance is improving.

Their percentage attendance is currently ***xx%***.

We really do appreciate your help as there is clear evidence that good school attendance improves a child's chance of success in life.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and look forward to seeing ongoing improvement.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss anything further or require any further advice or support.

Yours sincerely,

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix G – Letter Five – Regular Late Arrival

Regular Late Arrival – 3 occasions during any half term.

Date xx

Dear xxx

At **xxx** Academy, we are determined to ensure that **name of pupil** has the opportunity to achieve their best and we want them to have an excellent record of regular, punctual attendance. We monitor the arrival of any pupil and where we notice any regular lateness, we are keen to work with parents to see if there are any further actions or support we can implement to improve punctuality.

This is to inform you that **name of pupil** has been late on number days so far this academic year.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re explain work.

It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is therefore essential that you ensure that your child arrives at the Academy on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others.

The table below provides an example of the impact of lost learning through pupil lateness.

Number of minutes late <i>per day</i> over a school year	Approximate equivalent number of days lost learning
5	3
10	6.5
15	10
20	13

The Academy site is open for pupils to arrive from **xxx am** and the children are expected to be in class ready to begin the day by **xxx am**.

Our registers open at **xxx am** and close at **xxx am**; arrival at the Academy between these times is classed as late and after registers close is classed as absent.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the Academy office to inform us when you will arrive.

We value the working partnership we have with parents so, if you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's attendance or punctuality with us please contact insert details here. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing an improvement in your child's punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Officer

Appendix H – Letter Six – Ongoing Persistent Late Arrival

Ongoing Persistent late Arrival more than 3 occasions in any half term or unauthorised absence codes as a consequence of lateness resulting in less than 96% attendance.

Date xx

Dear xxx

Further to my previous letter / our telephone conversation, I am writing to inform you that your child is continuing to arrive late at the Academy.

Between **date and date**, **he/she** was late on **xx** occasions and has missed **xx minutes / hours** of education.

When **name of pupil** arrives late, he/she misses valuable learning time which can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

I am therefore inviting you to attend a meeting with me on **date / time**. It is really important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to **name of pupil** lateness can be discussed and appropriate support put in place to improve their punctuality.

You are welcome to bring someone along to support you.

Please email or telephone us to confirm receipt of this letter and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting **xxxx, e-mail address and telephone number**.

Please be aware that the high levels of unauthorised absences or poor punctuality can result in a referral to the Local Authority or other agencies which have a duty to investigate further and could result in legal action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely,

Academy Attendance Officer

