



**St Edward's**  
RC/CE VA School

# Attendance Policy

**Reviewed by the Pastoral Committee**  
**On: 20 October 2016**

**Ratified at the St Edward's FGB**  
**On: 6 December 2016**

**Next review date: December 2019**

**Member of SLT responsible: Mr A Bousfield**

## **Statement of Intent**

At St Edward's School we recognise that regular school attendance is crucial if students are to reach their potential. It impacts upon levels of attainment, relationships, with peers, future opportunities and enjoyment of school. That is why St Edward's is committed to ensuring that every child has the right to access the education to which he/she is entitled to and adopting the Department for Education (DFE) target of a minimum of **95%** attendance.

Good attendance is important because

- Research and statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and high education, employment or training.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **St Edward's Responsibilities**

In accordance to DFE amended guidance 2016, St Edward's will;

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every student has access to full time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Uphold their legal duty to identify students who are failing to attend regularly [below 90%] and to inform the Borough of Poole. 90% is deemed to be the threshold for persistent absence.
- Encourage and educate parents and carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure that all students are punctual to their lessons.
- Have a member of the senior leadership team oversee, direct, coordinate the school's work to improve attendance and ensure the schools policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents and carers the need and reasons for the child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A letter or explanation from a student's home does not mean the absence will be authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

### **Responsibility of Tutors**

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Follow up unexplained absences and refer onto Head of Year when warranted.
- When a student's attendance reaches 96% contact home to inform that they are getting close to below school target of 95%

### **Responsibility of Head of Year**

- Liaise with LMI on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence and monitor any safeguarding issues.
- Refer to Student Engagement Team when necessary.
- When a student's attendance reaches 91% contact home to discuss attendance and make aware that almost at persistent absence 90%

### **Responsibility of Assistant Headteacher**

- Promote high levels of attendance across all students
- When a student's attendance reaches 90% Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for that year group to contact home to make parents and carers aware that below persistent absence rate (letter in appendix)
- Liaise with the borough's School Attendance Worker (SAW) to meet with student
- Action plan implemented
- 4 week review of attendance
- If no improvement refer to School Attendance Worker
- External agencies considered
- Support vulnerable groups
- Liaise with Student Engagement Team for student support
- Liaise with external agencies to safeguard students with attendance concerns.

### **Responsibility of School Attendance worker**

- The Borough of Poole's SAW will act as a consultant and advisor on attendance and will work in partnership with the school to reduce persistent absence.
- They will also advise on legal matters and penalty notices.
- They will meet with students and parents and carers of those with low attendance.
- Liaise with other external agencies to support students and families.

### **Responsibility of students.**

- Attend everyday unless they are too ill to attend or have an authorised absence
- Arrive at school and lessons on time
- Go to all registrations and lessons
- Take responsibility for registering at Students Office if they are late or are leaving school site during school hours.
- Provide evidence following absence or appointments.

### **Reasonability of Parents and Carers**

Ensuring your child's attendance at school is a parents and carers legal responsibility (section 44 1996 Education act). Therefore parents and carers are expected to;

- Inform school on first day of absence
- Make sure absence is accounted for by contacting the student absence line or email absence address and following up with a letter to tutor on return to school (01202 740950 then select appropriate option for the year group student is in or email [absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk](mailto:absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk)).
- Discuss with Head of Year any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year for their child
- Avoid taking students out of school for non-emergency medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. Requests must be made in writing and sent to the Headteacher.
- Keep contact details up to date with the school.

## **Procedures for Recording Attendance**

### **Registration & Lateness**

- The school day starts at 8.45am and students are expected to be in tutor time at this time. Tutor is 8.45am until 9.10am
- Legally a register must be marked twice daily. Once at start of the school day during tutor time and again in the afternoon at the beginning of period 4.
- Tutors to only mark students present if they have physically seen them.
- If a student arrives between 8.45am and 9.15pm the attendance will be recorded as L (before registers close)
- If a student arrives after 9.15am they will be recorded as U (late after registers close)
- If a student arrives late to period 4 the attendance will be registered as L for that session (before registers close)
- Arrival after the close of registers will be marked as unauthorised absence code U in line with DFE guidance. This mark shows them as on site, but legally recorded as an absence.
- All lateness is recorded daily, this information will be required by courts should prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- If a student is late due to a Medical appointment then they will receive an authorised absence code M.

### **Reporting Student Absence**

A child not attending school will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Therefore the following procedure must be followed by parents and carers and the school.

- **On the first day of absence** the parents and carers must inform the school by contacting the school's students absence line (01202 740950 then select appropriate option for the year group student is in or email [absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk](mailto:absence@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk)). This information will be used to update the registers
- Parents and carers must provide a note to the tutor explaining reason for absence.

In response to absence the school actions will include;

- Telephone or text parents and carers on the first day of absence if we haven't heard from them via the school's student absence line or absence email.
- Invite you in for a discussion with the Tutor or Head of Year about the situation if absence persists or is regularly repeated.
- Refer matters to Assistant Headteacher and the Borough of Poole's School Attendance Worker if absence is unauthorised or falls below 90%
- If a student has been absent and no contact has been able to be made by the **third day of absence** the school will initiate the Poole Borough's Child Missing in Education (CME) procedure.
- If a student has been absent for 10 consecutive days without explanation then it has a legal duty to report it to Child Social Services.

### **Persistent Absence Procedure**

If a student absence drops below 90% for whatever reason (authorised or non authorised) they are defined as persistently absent. If a student falls into this category parents and carers will be invited in to discuss an action plan to support the student.

### **Attendance codes**

St Edward's will record a student's attendance using one of the approved DFE codes as set out in DFE guidance 2016. [See appendix 1.](#)

### **Authorised absence**

Only St Edward's is able to authorise absence, neither the LA or parents and carers have the power to do so. Absence will only be authorised after careful consideration in line with the

Education [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulations 2016 – the following reasons are for treating a student's absence as authorised:

- Illness that deems a child 'unfit' for school.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher.

### **Leave of Absence from Learning**

Parents and carers do not have a right to take students on a family holiday during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Each request will be dealt with individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. Each decision made will not set a precedent for future decisions.

### **Prolonged absence due to illness**

- ◆ Any absence of two weeks or more or repeated illness will need to be supported by a Medical Certificate.
- ◆ Parents and carers will be contacted to discuss provision of education after a minimum period of 10 days as the LA has to ensure that no student is without access to education for more than 15 working days.
- ◆ The school has a responsibility to ensure that the student's education continues as fully as possible. Work will be provided if requested, wherever possible for an absence over 5 days.
- ◆ Liaison will be with parents and carers, and where appropriate School Attendance Worker, Pastoral Manager, School Nurse and/or GP

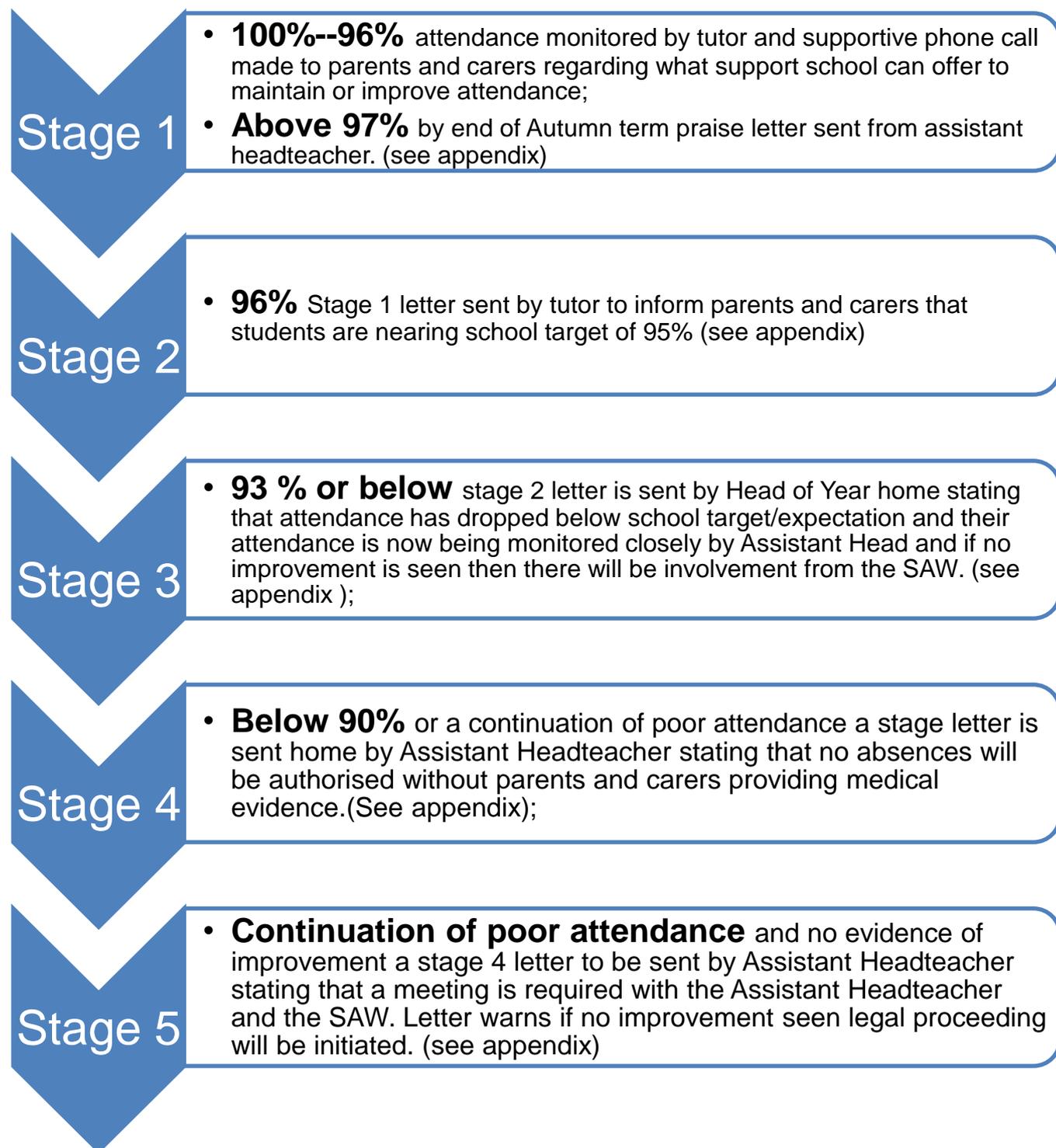
### **Unauthorised absence**

- ◆ Unauthorised absence is any absence that is not authorised by the school, including unauthorised holidays.
- ◆ Unauthorised absence will be followed up with parents and carers and any problems identified and addressed.
- ◆ When necessary the school will refer unauthorised absences to Poole Borough's School Attendance Worker which could result in legal action being taken.

### **Procedures for Preventing Persistent Absence**

St Edward's implements an escalating 5 stage system to support parents and carers and students to maintain and improve attendance. In response to on-going monitoring by tutors and Year Leader

as well as half termly audits and reviews by the School's Attendance Worker and Assistant Headteachers the following stages are put in place;



#### **Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Policy**

Implementation and consistent following of procedures is the responsibility of all teachers.

Monitoring of daily attendance will be done by a member of the support staff liaising with tutors, Year Leaders and Assistant Headteachers.

Monitoring and review of the policy's effectiveness should take place on an annual basis. This is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher responsible for student attendance.

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

### Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

## Absence codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their GCSEs
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

## Administrative codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

## Stage 2 tutor letter; Drop to 96% letter

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

I am writing to you because <Name> attendance has dropped below 96% this school year.  
I enclose a copy of their attendance certificate.

Good attendance at school is linked to better GCSE grades, please speak to your child about the importance of attending school every day.

I will be monitoring his/her attendance so that I can offer any support if it is needed.

Whilst we would like students to strive for 100% whenever possible we appreciate that 96% may appear to be a good level of attendance however it is only 1% above the school and the government's target of 95%. We are therefore keen to explore how we can help you to improve your child's attendance.

We are grateful for your support

Yours sincerely

Form Tutor.

Appendix 2

### **Stage 3 HOY letter; Drop to 93%**

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

At St Edward's School we are always looking to improve the standard of education. The Department for Education has found that an attendance of 90% in a school year can lower a student's GCSE performance by one grade in each subject. The Government's expectation is that all students should attend school at least 95% of the time, with 90% being considered Persistent Absence.

During a recent attendance audit with our School Attendance worker we noted that «First\_Name»'s attendance was «percent»% I therefore have a responsibility to bring this to your attention as it is only <<percent%>> above being defined as persistent absence and to inform you that we will continue to monitor «First\_Name»'s attendance.

We recognise that some attendance is not possible for understandable reasons and it is possible that we may be able to offer some support or advice to help improve «First\_Name»'s attendance. Please contact us at school if there is anything we can do to help; or to inform us of any reason that is preventing «First\_Name» from having regular attendance that we are unaware of. It will also enable us to correctly record any absence.

We will continue to monitor «First\_Name»'s absence and inform you by letter if we need to invite you for a meeting if their attendance continues to decline.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year

Appendix 4

## **Stage 4 letter – Assistant Headteacher. Drop below 90% due to repeated Medical**

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

At St Edward's School we are always looking to improve the standard of education. The Department for Education has found that an attendance of 90% in a school year can lower a student's GCSE performance by one grade in each subject. The Government's expectation is that all students should attend school at least 95% of the time, with 90% being considered Persistent Absence.

During a recent attendance audit with our School Attendance worker we noted that «First\_Name»'s attendance was «percent»% I therefore have a responsibility to bring this to your attention as it is <<percent%>> below the persistent absence baseline and to inform you that we will continue to monitor «First\_Name»'s attendance with the Borough of Poole's School Attendance Worker.

**Following this audit, <Name> absences due to illness were highlighted, and we now ask for medical proof for the school to authorise any future absences. Evidence can take the form of an appointment card, copy of a prescription or a letter from your GP. We would never expect you to pay for the evidence that you provide.**

We recognise that some attendance is not possible for understandable reasons and it is possible that we may be able to offer some support or advice to help improve «First\_Name»'s attendance. Please contact us at school if there is anything we can do to help; or to inform us of any reason that is preventing «First\_Name» from having regular attendance that we are unaware of. It will also enable us to correctly record any absence.

We will continue to monitor «First\_Name»'s absence and inform you by letter if we need to invite you for a meeting if their attendance continues to decline.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Headteacher

Appendix 5

**Stage 5 continued decline in attendance.  
Example Letter, Letters are personalised and sent from the Borough of  
Poole.**

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

RE: «First\_Name» «Surname»

I am writing as the Education Welfare Officer overseeing attendance for St Edward's School. The above named pupil is an open case to me due to concerns regarding his/her extremely low school attendance. This is particularly concerning at this stage in his/her schooling, as a Year 9 pupil he/she will have missed a significant amount of preparation work for her GCSEs.

«First\_Name»'s current attendance is 65.9% with 2.22% recorded as unauthorised by the school. He/She has not attended since the 12 March 2015.

St Edward's School are however, authorising absence due to the parent's reasons given for absences stated as ..... The school and I are extremely concerned that «First\_Name» is seemingly missing school in anticipation of receiving support from the CAMHS service.

I wanted for you to be aware of how much school «First\_Name» is missing and ask that you assist our service in knowing how best to support this family whilst increasing «First\_Name»'s school attendance.

I appreciate your time.

Yours sincerely

School Attendance Worker

cc «Assistant Head» - St Edward's School

Appendix 6

## **Stage 5 example letter requesting meeting with parents and carers.**

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

I have written to you previously expressing my concern about «First\_Name»'s attendance at school. After another audit with the Education Welfare Officer «First\_Name»'s attendance has not improved significantly. «His/Her» current attendance is «percentage»%.

Research undertaken suggests that students with less than 90% attendance are likely to achieve one grade lower at GCSE than those with full attendance.

I am therefore requesting that you attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer on «Date» **and** «Time» at St Edward's School to discuss the situation. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess the support that can be offered to «First\_Name» and to develop a plan to improve «His/Her»'s attendance.

Please contact «Assistant Head» at school to confirm that you can attend the meeting

Yours sincerely

«Assistant Head»  
Assistant Headteacher

Appendix 7

## **Stage 1 Praise letter above 97% by end of Autumn 1.**

«Home\_salutation»  
«Full\_address»  
«Home\_post\_code»

Date

Dear «Home\_salutation»

It is with Great pleasure that I am writing to inform you of <name> 's excellent attendance last term. <name> 's attendance was a commendable <<percentage%>>

We know from research based evidence and experience that there is strong link between good attendance and academic progress and I am sure this will help <Name> fulfil their potential.

Please take this opportunity to congratulate <name> and reinforce the excellent attendance habits they have developed.

I would like to acknowledge your role in our education partnership. Without your strong support and influence I am sure it would be more difficult to achieve such a positive result.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Headteacher.