



St Matthew Academy

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Our motto is 'Let your light shine'. It is taken from St Matthew's Gospel and captures our belief in the uniqueness of each individual. Our aim is to ensure that the talents and strengths of each pupil are encouraged, developed and celebrated

Successful, confident learners

High expectations, outstanding achievements

Inclusive, caring, Catholic community

Nurturing talent, cultivating ambition

Excellence for all

Date of Approval	Summer 2018
Review Date	Summer 2020

1. AIM

St Matthew Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each to realise his/her true potential. The Academy will strive to provide a welcoming, caring, Catholic environment, whereby each member of the Academy community feels wanted and secure. It is the aim of all staff at St Matthew Academy to work in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers to enable all pupils to achieve the best possible attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year.

2. PRINCIPLES

The aim of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy reflects the aims and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff. There is a clear link between poor attendance and lower academic achievement.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at the Academy.
2. To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
3. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
4. To recognise the external factors which influence pupils' attendance and work with parents/carers to address difficulties.
5. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance and punctuality.
6. To promote effective partnerships with other Services and External Agencies where appropriate to promote good attendance.
7. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Registration

Schools and academies by law have to register pupils twice a day; first thing in the morning at the start of the Academy day, and again in the afternoon session. If a pupil fails to attend or arrives late, they can be marked as absent for that session.

Secondary Academy

Form tutors will mark the registers during morning and afternoon tutor time.

Primary Academy

Class teachers will mark the registers within 20 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions starting.

4.2 Parent/Carer Responsibility

It is the parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend the Academy where they are registered regularly. Once a child is registered at the Academy, attendance is compulsory until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which a child turns 16.

If a pupil is unable to attend the Academy, parents/carers are expected:

- To contact the Academy before 8.30am on the first day of a pupil's absence by email, text or telephone. A reason for absence must be given and where possible, an expected date of return.
- To contact the Academy when the period of absence runs longer than originally advised giving a reason and new date of expected return to the Academy.
- To provide a letter (or written note in the pupil's planner) explaining the absence on the day the pupil returns to the Academy.
- To provide supporting evidence if requested, to enable informed decisions to be made by the Academy when authorising absence

Parents/carer should contact the Academy if they are concerned about their child's attendance, or if their child is experiencing difficulties either in or outside the Academy which are affecting their attendance. The Academy aims to work in partnership with parents/carers and will discuss ways to support a pupil and family to ensure improved attendance.

4.3 Absence Authorisation

If a pupil of compulsory Academy age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. Only the Academy Head of School, or designated staff, can authorise a pupil's absence. Additional evidence such as proof of appointments, or letters from GP's confirming illness, may be required before an absence is authorised.

Authorised Absences are mornings or afternoons away from the Academy for a good reason, such as illness or another unavoidable reason which have been authorised by the Academy Head of School, or designated staff.

Unauthorised Absences are those that the Academy Head of School, or designated staff, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence by the parent and can include:

- Keeping pupils away from the Academy without a good reason
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at the Academy too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the Academy in advance
- Absences where evidence has been requested, but not provided by the parent/carer

Absences immediately before or after Academy holidays will only be authorised with supporting evidence.

4.4 Term Time Holidays and Arrangements for Requesting Exceptional Leave of Absence

Leave during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where there are exceptional circumstances permission must be requested from the Academy Head of School in writing in advance with supporting evidence. Authorisation and length of leave is at the Academy Head of School's discretion. If leave is taken without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the matter will be referred to the Local Authority. A Penalty Notice may be issued resulting in a £120 fine per parent per pupil. If paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice the amount

payable is £60 per parent per pupil.

Notes regarding exceptional circumstances:

- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is not considered an exceptional circumstance
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside Academy hours. Pupils may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events

The legal framework governing pupil's leave of absence from school during term time is set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

4.5 Medical and Dental Appointments

Wherever possible, parents/carers are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside Academy time. Where such appointments in Academy time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance if at all possible. A 'present' mark may still be awarded if the pupil attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. Evidence of the appointment may be requested before the absence is authorised.

4.6 Punctuality

Primary Phase of the Academy

The Academy day starts at 9.00am. All pupils are expected to arrive at the Academy by 8.55am and go directly to their designated areas. Registers close at 9.40am. Pupils arriving after 9.00am will be recorded as late; those arriving after 9.45am will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

The procedures for late arrival are laid out below:

- If a pupil arrives after 9.00am but before the Primary gate closes, they will be recorded as late by a member of the Primary Senior Leadership Team.
- If a pupil arrives after the Primary gate has closed at 9.15am, they should sign in at the Academy reception desk. They will then be escorted to their class.
- Pupils in Year 6 arriving late without a valid note or message from parents/carers will receive a lunchtime Time Out on the day of the lateness

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives promptly. Parent/carers of pupils who arrive persistently late will be contacted and if no improvement is observed, further action will result.

Persistent lateness will be addressed in line with the Primary Phase Punctuality Protocol and could be referred to the Local Authority which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence.

Secondary Phase of the Academy

The Academy day starts at 8.40am. All pupils are expected to arrive at the Academy by 8.35am and go directly to their designated areas to line up. Registers close at 9.20am. Pupils arriving after 8.37am will be recorded as late; those arriving after 9.25am will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

The procedures for late arrival are laid out below:

- If a pupil arrives after 8.37am they should get their planner stamped and proceed directly to their tutor group. They will be recorded as late by a member of the Secondary Senior Leadership Team.
- If a pupil arrives after 9.00am they should sign in at the Academy reception desk
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am need a note or message from parent/carer explaining their late arrival
- All pupils arriving after 8.40am without a valid note or message from their parent/carer, will receive a detention the same day. Directors of Learning will decide if a reason provided for lateness is valid

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives promptly. Parent/carers of pupils who arrive persistently late will be contacted and if no improvement is observed, further action will result.

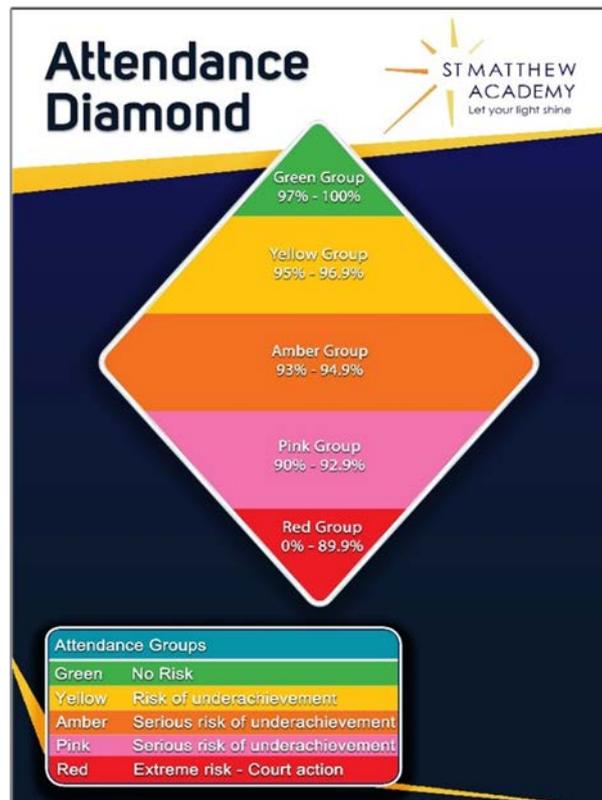
Persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority and may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence.

5. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Improving attendance is a whole Academy responsibility. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of Academy staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole Academy approach to attendance monitoring and intervention.

The Academy has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concerns.



The Academy will carry out regular register checks and contact parents/carers when a pupil's attendance or punctuality is under target. Parents/carers may be invited to attend meetings to the Academy to discuss issues affecting a pupil's attendance.

Each pupil will be considered individually before any action is taken. In the Primary phase of the Academy, actions will be agreed by the Academy Attendance Officer and the member of Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for attendance. In the Secondary phase of the Academy, actions will be agreed by the Academy Attendance Officer, Directors of Learning and member of the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for attendance.

Pupils who miss 10% of Academy days are called 'Persistent Absentees' by the Department for Education whatever the reason for their absence (authorised or unauthorised). Special procedures will be applied to pupils who fall into this category.

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the matter being referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued or for investigation which could result in prosecution. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupils at the Academy. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per pupils, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

The legal framework governing Penalty Notices is set out in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, amended 2013.

Pupils whose attendance and punctuality is outstanding, or is most improved, will be recognised with certificates and considered for further rewards which include trips, prizes and whole class or form treats.

PENALTY NOTICE

Section 444 EDUCATION ACT 1996

Please read the notes overleaf carefully

PART 1

If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

TO: (Parent/carer name)

OF: (Parent/carer address)

You are a parent of (pupil name), date of birth (pupil dob), of (pupil address), (called in this notice "the pupil"), who is a registered pupil at St Matthew Academy.

Between (date) and (date) the pupil failed to attend regularly at the school.

This notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence given above. The amount of the penalty is £60 or £120 in accordance with the table overleaf. If you pay this penalty within the time limits set out below, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence as set out in this notice.

Payment should be made within 21 days. If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is doubled to £120. Within 21 days of Service of this notice, that is before (date) the payment is £60.00. If after (date) but before (date) the payment is £120.00.

Payment can be made at a Post Office or Pay Point. Please take the attached Payment Request to your nearest post office or pay point. (Please see the Notes section for other ways to pay). The attached payment request can be used for payments made within 21 days - £60.00, thereafter within 28 days payment increases to £120.00.

Late or part payments will not be accepted and no reminders will be sent. **If payment is not received by (date) you may be prosecuted for the offence, and upon summary conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment for a period of up to 3 months or both.**

This notice is issued by: Attendance, Inclusion & Participation Service, London Borough of Lewisham.

Date of Service: (date)

Fixed Penalty Notice Number: (reference number)

NOTES

1. Contact Details

If you have any queries about this notice, please contact London Borough of Lewisham at Attendance, Inclusion & Participation Service, Telephone Number: 0208 314 6272.

1. Amount of Penalty

The amount of the penalty is as follows:

When Paid

Within 21 days of Service of this notice; **before (date)** £60.00

Within 28 days of Service, **after (date)** but **before (date)** £120.00

2. Code of Conduct

This notice was issued in accordance with a local code of conduct drawn up by London Borough of Lewisham. Any correspondence about the code should be addressed to the London Borough of Lewisham, Attendance, Inclusion & Participation Service, 3rd Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU. Telephone number 0208 314 6272.

3. Withdrawal

This notice may be withdrawn by London Borough of Lewisham if it is shown that it should not have been issued to you or has not been issued to you in accordance with the local code of conduct. If you believe that the notice was wrongly issued, you must contact the London Borough of Lewisham before the end of the 28 day period to ask for it to be withdrawn. The London Borough of Lewisham will consider your request and will contact you to let you know whether the notice is withdrawn. If the notice is not withdrawn and you do not pay, you will be liable to prosecution for the offence that your child has failed to attend school regularly.

4. Payment

Payment can be made at a Post Office or Pay Point. Please take the attached Payment Request to your nearest post office or pay point. Alternatively you can pay with most debit and credit cards, except Diners Club and American Express. Payments by debit card or credit card can be made by telephone between **9.00am to 12.00 noon, and 2.00pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday**. Please call 0208 314 6272. Please allow 2 working days for the payment to reach us.

6. Prosecution

If you do not pay the penalty, and the notice is not withdrawn, you will be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. You will receive a separate summons for this which will give you notice of the time and date of the court hearing. You will be able to defend yourself and you would be advised to seek legal representation; in some circumstances you may be entitled to legal aid.

