MAST

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**St. James' Church of England Primary Academy**

**1st September 2026**

MAST

Moving Ahead, Serving Together

Belong • Be Safe • Flourish

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## 1. Statement of Intent

MAST (the Trust) is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. We expect pupils to attend regularly and punctually and we actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils, including those in the sixth form.

This policy reflects the core aims and purpose of MAST. At MAST, we are committed to ensuring that every child is known and every child is enabled. Guided by our values of Belong, Be Safe, Flourish, we create inclusive and nurturing school communities where every individual is recognised, valued and supported. Inspired by the belief that each person is known and called by name, we work together to provide the relationships, opportunities and support that enable all children to grow, achieve and flourish.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote 100% attendance and good punctuality.

The Trust Board of Directors, Headteacher and staff in partnership with parents/carers have a duty to promote full attendance at the school. Staff at the school must monitor the attendance of each individual pupil from a safeguarding perspective and it is the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure their child attends school daily.

Our schools will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

We will apply this policy fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance, mindful of our obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also complies with our Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Safeguarding and Attendance

At MAST we routinely monitor attendance data to identify trends and patterns of absence across all pupils as part of our standard procedures. We recognise that both sudden and gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may be indicative of underlying safeguarding concerns.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding issues to the appropriate authorities. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, and in accordance with our procedures, we will notify the Local Authority and/or the Police of any pupil who is absent from school and whose whereabouts cannot be established, despite reasonable enquiries such as, contacting all emergency contact and home visits. This action will be taken where there are concerns for the pupil's welfare or safety.

Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and wellbeing. The school recognises that unexplained, persistent, or sudden changes in attendance may indicate that a pupil is experiencing difficulties, barriers to learning, or may require additional support. For this reason, attendance is monitored as part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities and concerns will be responded to promptly and proportionately.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Trust Board

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data and ensure the Trust Executive help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the Trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools.

### 4.2 Trust Executive Team

The Trust Executive Team is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the Trust.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure all schools record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities.
  - Making sure all schools work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
  - Making sure the school attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
  - Making sure schools have high aspirations for all pupils, and adapt processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through Director of Education termly attendance review meetings.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust/school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Holding Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries.
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the Trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources.

### 4.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the governance committee and the Trust.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - the importance of good attendance;
    - that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues;
    - the school's legal requirements for keeping registers; and
    - the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days.
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### 4.4 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Fay Cordingley and can be contacted via office@stjames.medway.sch.uk.

### 4.5 The School Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer at each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer is Fay Cordingley and can be contacted via office@stjames.medway.sch.uk.

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

### 4.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless the parent clearly states the day they will return on their phone call) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Sue Weston, HSSW, who can be contacted via office@stjames.medway.sch.uk.

### 4.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time.

## 5. Recording Attendance

### 5.1 Admissions Register

At MAST, we maintain our admissions register (also referred to as the school roll) in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register must include specific personal details for every pupil, including:

- Full name and name used at school
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)

- Home address
- Full names and addresses of each parent/carer
- Emergency contact details (at least two telephone number per parent/carer the pupil normally lives with)
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Name and address of the last school attended (where applicable)
- Boarding status (where relevant)
- Any additional addresses where the pupil will normally reside and the date from which they will reside there
- Details of any other school the pupil is attending concurrently

Pupils are entered on the admission register on their starting day, before or at the beginning of the first school session on that day. This is normally the first day agreed between the school and the parent/carer for the pupil to attend, or, where no day has been agreed, the first day the pupil attends the school.

A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the admissions register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations applies. Any removal outside of these conditions constitutes unlawful off-rolling.

It is essential that the admissions register is kept accurate and up to date. Therefore, MAST regularly requests updates from parents/carers regarding changes to:

- Home address
- Emergency contact telephone numbers
- Email addresses

The school will formally issue a data collection request two times per academic year. Where parents/carers do not respond to these requests, the school will take further steps to obtain accurate information. This may include direct contact, home visits, or referral to relevant agencies if safeguarding concerns arise.

### 5.2 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm.

**5.3 Unplanned Absence**

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of their child's absence by 9.05am, or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by either emailing the school office or using the absence reporting facility on Arbor or by contacting the school on our absent line 01634 270341.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than five days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily as this is considered on an individual, case by case basis.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

**5.4 Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by speaking to Miss Cordingley or Mrs Weston or emailing the office to request a leave of absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section five to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

**5.5 Lateness and Punctuality**

The morning register will be taken by 9.05am. Any pupil who arrives after this time will be marked as late, using the appropriate code of L. The morning register will then close at 9.30am. Any pupil who arrives after this time will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code of U.

### 5.6 Following up on Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the parents/carers to establish the reason for absence. If no contact is made and the absence continues, the school will make further attempts to contact parents/carers on the second day and may conduct a home visit where appropriate. If the school remains unable to establish the child's whereabouts or welfare by the third day of absence, a referral may be made to the Police to undertake a safe and well-being check.

  Children identified as vulnerable, including those subject to safeguarding plans, children in care and pupils with known welfare concerns, will receive an enhanced and immediate response to unexplained absence, which may include additional contact attempts, home visits and liaison with relevant agencies.

- Once the reason for absence has been established, identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

### 5.7 Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy) about their child's attendance and absence levels. This happens at the beginning of Term 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and in the child's end of year school report.

## 6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### 6.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/carers and the Local Authority do not have the power to authorise absences.

The Headteacher (or their delegate) will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher (or their delegate) will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview

- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

A leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. In order to ensure that the negative impact of leave of absence is minimised, applications for leave of absence will not be considered in the following periods or circumstances:

- During the first term of a new academic year.
- In SATs week for all Year 6 pupils (dates will be published in advance).
- Where attendance is below 96% for primaries unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The Headteacher (or their delegate) may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see section 5.3 for more detail).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration).
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience.

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

## 6.2 Tackling Unauthorised Absence and the use of Sanctions

### *Sanctions*

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### *Penalty Notices*

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks).
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same child, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

***Notices to Improve***

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between three and six weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

## 7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Attendance is celebrated every week, where the class with the highest attendance is celebrated and allowed to take home Attendance Ted. At the end of Term 2, Term 4 and Term 6, badges are awarded for good attendance: Term 2 - bronze badge for 94.5% and above, Term 4 - silver badge for 95% and above and Term 6 - gold badge for 95.5% and above.

We also work with Team EWS to promote and support good attendance. Team EWS provides advice, guidance and intervention when attendance becomes a concern. Their role includes working collaboratively with parents, carers and St. James' staff to identify barriers to attendance, offering support to improve attendance and ensuring that families understand their legal responsibilities with regards to their child's education.

## 8. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

### 8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where there are children who have complex barriers to attendance, we will work directly with the family to support, and gain additional information, advice and support from external agencies where needed.

### 8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a child has ill health or SEND leading to absence, we will work with the families to ensure that the child has all the support they need. We may contact external agencies for advice or support. Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Where a pupil's attendance is affected by a physical or mental health condition, SEND, or other identified need, the school will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, and phased reintegration where appropriate.

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Head Teacher, Miss Cordingley or the Home School Support Worker, Mrs Weston for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: NHS Children's Mental Health – Every Mind Matters.

Young Minds advice for parents

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Where to find mental health support for children

- North Kent Mind offers The Medway Therapeutic Alliance, led by North Kent Mind and funded by Medway Council, they bring together a range of organisations so families can access support through one clear pathway, without needing to navigate multiple services alone.
- The NHS offers advice on Mental health support for children and young people.
- Action for Children helps children and families look after their mental health with simple tools and support to feel better and cope with challenges.
- The Childhood Bereavement Network offers guidance on supporting a child through grief.
- Visit NHS - Advice for parents for support if you think your child may have an eating disorder.
- The Young Minds Parents Helpline offers parents free and confidential advice via phone, email, or webchat.
- Teachers, school nurses, social workers, and GPs can help you find the right support.
- If have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline to talk to dedicated child protection specialists. They will be able to advise and take any necessary action. The Helpline is open 7 days a week, and can be contacted by:
  - visiting the website
  - emailing help@nspcc.org.uk or
  - calling 0808 800 5000.

**Where to get urgent help for mental health**

If you or your child are in a mental health crisis, get help straight away.

Visit the NHS urgent mental health support page to find 24/7 helplines, crisis services, and emergency support.

We recognise that some pupils may experience physical health difficulties, mental health challenges, special educational needs or other circumstances that can affect attendance. Where this happens, we will work with families and relevant professionals to provide appropriate support.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### 8.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

All pupil absence will be followed up as soon as possible. The action taken, and the responses received, will always be recorded.

### 8.4 Pupils on reduced (Part-time) Timetables (RTT)

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the best interests of the pupil, a temporary reduced timetable may be considered to support the pupil's access to education, reintegration into school, or to meet an identified need. Any reduced timetable must be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, other relevant professionals and agencies.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible (max 6 weeks), and subject to regular review, with a clear reintegration plan in place to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

The school will review the arrangement regularly with the pupil, parent/carer and relevant professionals to ensure it remains appropriate and continues to be in the pupil's best interests and is progressing towards a return to full-time education.

Attendance registers will be completed in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE guidance. Sessions that form part of an agreed reduced timetable will normally be recorded using Code C2 (Leave of Absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable). Where a pupil is receiving education through another approved arrangement, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

Where a pupil has a social worker, the school will ensure they are informed and involved in the reduced timetable process. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will liaise with the Local Authority to ensure that the provision and support specified within the plan are reviewed as appropriate.

Our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to the Local Authority (LA) in line with their Reduced Timetable Policy.

## 9. Attendance Monitoring

Every Trust school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. The Trust Board will monitor attendance and absence data on a regular basis.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school (and Trust Executive at Trust level) will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the local governance committee and Trust Board.

To support monitoring the following percentages are used:

Persistent Absence = 10% or more absence.

Severe Absence = 50% or more absence.

Attendance target for the Trust of 96%.

### 9.1 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, attendance will be specifically monitored for:
  - Children in Care
  - Previously Looked After Children
  - SEND pupils
  - EHCP pupils
  - Pupil Premium
  - FSM pupils
  - Young Carers
  - EAL pupils
  - Children known to Social Care
  - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils
  - Pupils with medical needs
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Identify attendance patterns across the Trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.

### 9.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.3 below).
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governance committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

### 9.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Trust's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Produce a strategy to reduce persistent absence, attached at Appendix 3.
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 6.2, above).
- Following the procedures as set out at 6.2.

### 9.4 Children Missing Education (CME)

MAST will add and remove pupils from the admissions register in accordance with Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 applies.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil may be missing education or has potentially moved out of Medway Local Authority, we will consult with our Local Authority Attendance Officer within five school days. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts. These may include:

- Conducting a home visit
- Contacting schools attended by siblings
- Liaising with the allocated social worker/keyworker, where the family is known to Social Care/Family Solutions/Early Help

If the pupil's location remains unknown, or it is confirmed that they have left Medway, the school will complete and submit a Children Missing Education (CME) referral form to the Local Authority Attendance Officer within ten school days.

This process is aligned with statutory safeguarding duties and reflects the expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. It also supports the Local Authority commitment to identifying, tracking, and supporting children missing education, ensuring that all pupils receive suitable education provision

### 9.5 Direction Off-site (Off-site Direction)

We, as the home school, may use off-site direction as a short-term, time-limited intervention to support a pupil's behaviour. This involves the pupil attending another school, such as alternative provision or another setting, while remaining on school roll.

During this period, the pupil will usually be **dual registered**. We will notify parents in writing of the placement, including the reason, expected duration and intended outcomes, and will ensure regular review meetings take place.

Attendance will be recorded in line with statutory guidance: typically, **Code D** will be used where the pupil is attending another school under dual registration; **Code B** may be used where the provision is approved educational activity without dual registration; and where a pupil does not attend the agreed provision, this will normally be recorded as **Code O (unauthorised absence)**. **Code E** will only be used where absence is due to a suspension.

### 9.6 Managed Moves

A managed move is a voluntary and permanent transfer of a pupil from this (home) school to another mainstream school, used as an early intervention to support improved outcomes and avoid suspension or permanent exclusion. Managed moves will only take place where this is in the pupil's best interests and must be agreed by all parties, including parents, both schools and the admission Local Authority. The home school will ensure parents are fully informed and involved in decision-making and must not place pressure on families to consent.

Where a managed move is agreed, the pupil will be removed from this school's roll and admitted to the new school, meaning the pupil is **single registered**. Managed moves cannot be used on a trial basis; any temporary placement must be arranged through off-site direction.

## 10. Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Trust and school policies.

# St. James' Church of England Primary Academy
# Attendance Monitoring Procedures

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE**

Contact is made with parents for any pupil absence not reported.

If reasons for absence are not established, the absences are recorded as unauthorised, a home visit may take place and it will be escalated to the Headteacher.

**IF A PUPIL'S ATTENDANCE GIVES CAUSE FOR CONCERN - Support First**

An **Information Letter** is sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.

HSSW to telephone parents to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their child's attendance.

HSSW may also speak to the pupil to discuss any potential problems.

**IF A PUPIL'S ATTENDANCE DOES NOT IMPROVE**

The Attendance Team will review the pupil's attendance and how best to support them. In some cases, this may result in a **Medical Evidence Letter** being sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored and medical evidence is required to authorise future absences. This will be considered on an individual, case by case basis.

The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the Headteacher and HSSW to set targets and an **Attendance Contract** is drawn up with a four-week monitoring period.

**HAVE TARGETS BEEN MET?**

NO

If there are no improvements and the pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in any 10-week rolling period then parents will be invited to a meeting and a **Notice to Improve** is issued.

The progress in improving attendance will be monitored over the next 3-6 weeks.

If there is no improvement, then a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

YES

If targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Headteacher to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance.

Monitoring and communication with the parents continue until attendance stabilises to over 95%.

**HOLIDAYS TAKEN IN TERM TIME**

If absence is due to unauthorised holidays, the school will follow the National Penalty Framework and is likely to issue a penalty notice. This is £80 for the first absence of the child and increases to £160 for a second period of absence within any three-year rolling period.

The school will monitor attendance across terms and school years when calculating absence. If the pupil is absent for a third time due to unauthorised absence, then the school is likely to refer to the local authority for prosecution.

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The fol wing codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending a place other than the school** | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – leave of absence** | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **S** | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **C2** | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** | | |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| **E** | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** | | |
| **Q** | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| **Y1** | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| **Y2** | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| **Y4** | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Y5** | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>• In police detention<br>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>• Detained under a sentence of detention |
| **Y6** | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| **Y7** | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| **U** | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| **Administrative codes** | | |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| **#** | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |