

Attendance policy

Steiner Academy Bristol



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1. Aims

Every child has the right to a good education and securing good attendance at Steiner Academy Bristol is a vital part of this aspiration.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and on time, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At SAB, regular attendance of over 96% is the target for every child. A very important Ofsted judgement takes account of school attendance and if it is below these expectations, the school will be judged to be inadequate because of the effect that poor attendance has on attainment and learning.

The way that the curriculum is delivered according to seasons and rhythms in Steiner schools means that good attendance is extremely important and learners whose attendance falls below these levels, miss out on the special nature of education here at SAB.

Parents have a vital role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality levels, and are encouraged from the earliest ages to ensure that their child attends school at the required levels. The Taylor Report, 2012 showed that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically and they are more likely to be not in employment, education or training (NEET) when they leave school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken on the academy MIS, Arbor, at the start of the first session of each school day and the first afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present /
- Absent **N**
- Late, before the close of register **L** (before 9:15 am in the morning, before 1:45 pm in the afternoon)

Class teachers only mark present in the register and code absences as N for the attendance administrator to complete after all messages and other information have been gathered. Consistency and accuracy by trained staff are required since registers are legal documents and may be produced in court cases.

Any reason for absence or amendment to the attendance register will only be made by the trained attendance administrator staff and will include:

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **08:45** on each school day, in their classroom, ready for the day. The playground is open at 08:30 allowing time for everyone to make their way in time to their classrooms.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09.15. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15 and will be kept open until 1:45. Arrival after the close of registers will be marked as absence and will affect the child's attendance percentage as well as the school's overall reportable attendance percentage.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents are encouraged to help the office by leaving a message on the answerphone or send a message via ParentMail.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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.

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.

In addition, if a pupil is persistently absent (below 90%), the absence will not be authorised without reasonable evidence of illness. Please be aware, that for safeguarding purposes, the academy can request confirmation of medical appointments from the GP.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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 and the appointment card must be shown attached to the request for absence form.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

We monitor punctuality and encourage excellent levels in order to-

- * maximise individual learning
- * minimise the disruption for teachers, other class members and admin staff
- * preserve and respect the Steiner ethos and flow of lessons for all
- * set good habits for life

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code, this is statistically counted as present for that session.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code, this is marked as absent for that session.

Any latecomers can only enter the academy through the main Reception where they will need to sign in and provide a suitable reason.

Children who are regularly late:

- The attendance administrator will contact parents and log this issue on CPOMS, our safeguarding portal.
- If the issue is persistent this is escalated to the safeguarding team for further investigation.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

See FLOWCHART in the appendix

Children who are regularly absent:

- The attendance administrator will contact parents and log this issue on CPOMS, our safeguarding portal.
- If the issue is persistent this is escalated to the safeguarding team for further investigation.

3.5a Removal from school roll

If a pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of no less than 20 school days and-

1. At no time in that period was the absence authorised
2. We do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend school due to sickness or any unavoidable cause
3. Both the Academy Safeguarding Team and First Response have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the learner is, this will be escalated by First Response.

Working with the local authority, a pupil can be removed from roll if all of the above procedures around the location of the child have been followed.

(NB-see Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy- 'children missing from education' .It is not necessary to wait 20 days before informing the Local Authority and initiating missing child procedures. Any failure to ascertain a reason for absence within a couple of days (phone calls and visits to the home), must be treated as safeguarding concern.

3.6 Reporting to parents

A termly letter will be sent to parents, via ParentMail, in addition, parents have daily access to live attendance reporting for their child via the academy Parent Portal.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Government expects parents to take holidays outside of term times and the law makes it clear that Principals and Headteachers MAY NOT approve ANY requests for term time absence for holidays or for any other requests for leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances in rare cases.

Failure to attend school when leave of absence has been declined, can lead to a Penalty Notice being issued, if overall attendance is of concern, or where this is not the first occurrence.

Definition of 'exceptional circumstances'

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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.

Flexi-schooling requests

Due to the nature of our school day, ethos and associated, age related approach to the introduction of full time education, we do not accept any requests for flex- schooling, as this is unnecessary and highly disruptive to the flow of learning in our academy.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Prosecution: Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

4.2.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

4.2.3 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

4.2.4 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

4.2.5 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

4.2.6 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

4.2.7 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Bristol City Council Penalty Notice Protocol.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local area code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We recognise the importance of ensuring that children and parents are aware of the benefits of regular attendance. Our curriculum is designed around a flow; of the day, of the week, of the project.

- Regular communication about the flow of learning ie- what will be missed
- Regular communication about issues and concerns, in their widest sense
- Regular communication about positives
- Recognition of 100% attendance

We will do this through-

- weekly bulletin
- assemblies
- class newsletters

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance administrator monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents must contact the school on each day of absence, unless there is a doctors note, covering a particular period of time.

The **Persistent Absence** threshold is 10% -i.e. a child's attendance must be 90%+. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise this is escalated to the Academy Safeguarding Team.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is stored on our academy MIS, Arbor, parents have live access to this information through the parent portal, to enable them to take an active part in monitoring their child's attendance.

The safeguarding team monitor attendance of vulnerable children (SEN, LAC, children who are open safeguarding cases) as well as those children who are persistent absentees.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Administrator

The attendance administrator:

- Checks Arbor, after the close of registration to ensure all marks are in
- Ensures missing marks are added as soon as possible to Arbor
- Notes any information received from parents about absences (as well as put a note of such messages in the appropriate teacher's pigeon hole and
- Calls such parents of absent pupils who have not already provided information by 9.30- this includes using 'emergency only' numbers where necessary.
- This also applies to the afternoon register if there is an unexplained absence.
- Implement the Lost Child Procedure (see 'Lost Child Policy') if necessary
- Informs the Principal and Safeguarding team immediately in case of lost child.
- Adding reasons for absence to the register

The safeguarding team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Monitors attendance of vulnerable children and those on the Persistent Absence register
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with the Principal to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (/ or N), and submitting this information to the school office on the academy MIS Arbor.

Registers must be completed by 8:50 am in the morning and 1:25 pm in the afternoon.

7.5 Reception staff

Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

In case of pupil illness during the morning, the office staff will contact the parents/carers to collect the child and the afternoon session will be marked as authorised absence.

7.5a Bristol Traded Services- Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The academy can use the support of the Bristol Traded Services EWS. The EWS also undertakes attendance audits

The EWS can also follow up the actions taken by the academy; making contact with the family and taking or advising on further action or support: this can include the issuing of penalty notices and supporting prosecution, liaising with other agencies who may be involved to support the family, including calling a Team around the Child/Family referral.

The Educational Welfare Service can also support the academy with Fast Track procedures to prosecution when other solutions have failed.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the safeguarding lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

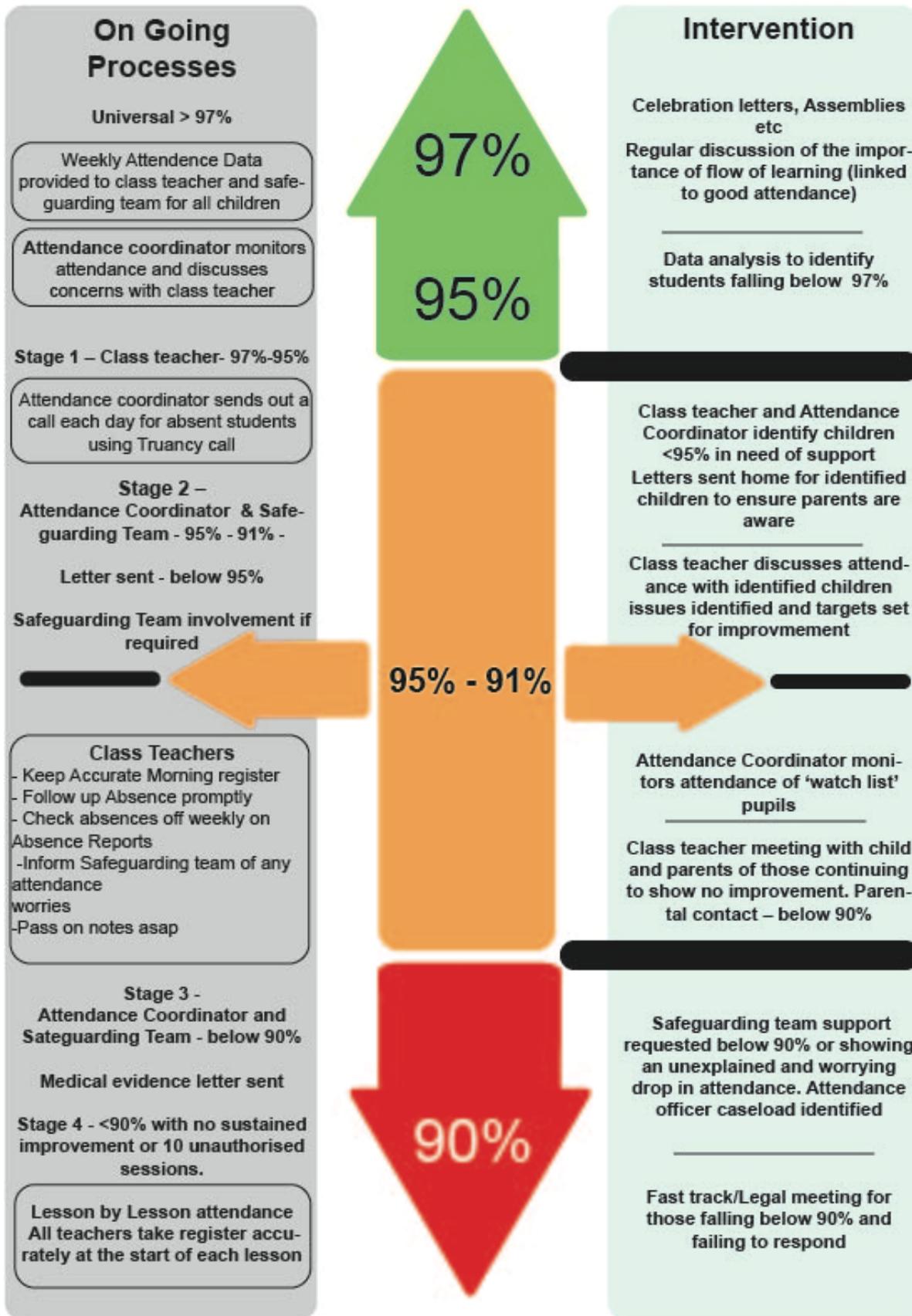
9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Document Control

Designated Governor role)	
Designated Staff member	Joss Hayes
Governor Committee	TLC
Approved by Governors	March 2018
Review date	March 2019

Appendix 1:



Appendix 2: attendance codes

The following 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious

		observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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 as a result of a local/national emergency, 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