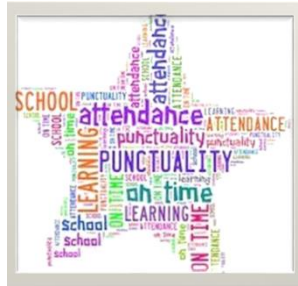




Learning and Caring Together,
“...they will flourish in the courts of our God.” (Psalm 92:13)

17th July 2023

ATTENDANCE LETTER



Dear Parent/Carers,

I am writing to share updates to our Attendance Policy (Trust and School) and to share the contextual landscape regarding school attendance. Changes will be implemented from the beginning of the new academic year in September 2023.

As you will be aware, high expectations for attendance have always been a priority for the Department for Education and Ofsted. Post Covid Pandemic, the government has emphasised and made clear the expectation on schools to ensure that children attend well and access their entitlement to a full time education. Government directives and Ofsted expectations have influenced our Trust (Staffordshire University Academies Trust) and St Edward's updated Attendance Policies and Procedures and I include extracts here for your reference (full policy available on our academy website).

All schools are expected to promote excellent attendance and reduce absence and ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children attend regularly and arrive to school on time.

Ofsted Expectations for **good schools** are that few pupils are absent and that the attendance of pupils who have concerning attendance is showing marked and sustained improvement.

Ofsted Expectations for **outstanding schools** are that pupils rarely miss a day at school and that the attendance of pupils who have concerning attendance is showing marked and sustained improvement.

In response to this, and as we strive to provide an outstanding education at St Edward's, we will continue to monitor each child's attendance and contact parents/carers when attendance falls below expectations of 96%+, to offer support and intervention as necessary.

Our attendance monitoring and analysis has identified two focus areas for us at St Edward's: Persistently Absent Pupils (those with attendance below 90%) and when access to a full time education is affected by holidays taken in term time.

In terms of holidays taken during term time, the government emphasise that:

- Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

*Please note that **exceptional circumstances for holidays during term time do not include challenges due to work patterns**. From September 2023, all decisions regarding authorised exceptional circumstances, for holidays taken during term time, will be discussed with governors prior to a decision being finalised.*

In response to expectations, our Local Academy Council Members (local governors), and senior leaders have agreed that **from September 2023 holidays during term time, for all children from the term after their 5th birthday, will be unauthorised and a penalty referral (fine) will be made to Staffordshire County Council**. The amount of the fine depends on how quickly it is paid: parents have to pay a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days; this rises to £120 if paid within 22 to 28 days of the notice being issued and If the fine is not paid, the parent can be prosecuted. (Please note: both parents may also be fined for the same absence and there is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.)

We do, of course, appreciate and understand that children (and adults) are unwell at times and individual medical circumstances and medical evidence are taken into consideration when authorising /unauthorising absence due to illness. If you need to report a child's absence, please leave a message on the school answerphone before 9:00am reporting absence and the reason for the absence.

I thank you, in advance, for your understanding and support in ensuring that your children's access to a full time education is a privilege and a priority for us all.

_Kind regards,



Mrs S. Machin
Principal

