

Attendance at school matters. There is a direct link between children's attendance at school and their achievement. In addition to this attendance also impacts on a child's physical, social and emotional development.

At St George's Primary School, we believe that good attendance is secured by developing a partnership between families, schools and our partner agencies involved in the social and emotional development of children.

Good attendance is anything above 98%. 96% is the national average. If a child has 98% attendance they will only miss 4 days from school.

In 2020-21 we recognise that all our lives will be disrupted by Covid-19 pandemic. However, we will seek to minimise the disruption to children's education by:

- Working hard to minimise risk of infection in school and the need for any partial or whole school closure.
- Ensuring that if children can't attend school due to symptomatic health risks, positive tests or test and trace that we have a supportive home learning offer so that learning can continue remotely.
- Ensuring that education continues if we have to have a partial or full closure of the school after advice from Public Health England.
- Ensuring that parents and families support our aims to have children at school. Department for Education has made it clear that parents, schools and local authorities must do everything they can to uphold children's legal right to be at school.

In the school introduced an attendance strategy in October 2017 to improve attendance, including children with persistent levels of absence (below 90%). Leadership and Governing Body are determined to ensure that attendance for our most vulnerable pupils improves. This includes disadvantaged pupils, children with SEND (special Educational Needs and Disabilities). This is our attendance strategy's key priority.

We recognise the importance of good attendance and expect all children on roll to attend every day as long as they are well enough to do so. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from education it is essential that they attend school regularly and punctually. They should only be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary. Children are only expected to attend school for 190 days each academic year.

We believe that children will attend school regularly if it is a happy and secure place and we work hard to create an environment where every child is valued. **That must be a high profile aim during Covid-19 pandemic.**

School absence will disrupt a child's learning and may affect their academic progress. It may also disrupt their friendships and impact on their social and emotional development. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. We have already witnessed the deficit caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in Summer Term of 2019-20 and must work tirelessly to ensure that this is not make worse this year.

School attendance is given a high profile throughout the school because we know how important it is. It is discussed at school assemblies, parents' evenings, staff meetings and governors' meetings. It is also included in school reports and newsletters. We also provide visual displays highlighting the importance of good attendance and punctuality in prominent positions within the school.

Once enrolled at a school parents have a legal responsibility as outlined in The Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctuality.

Expectations

Promoting good punctuality involves a strong partnership and commitment to children. Following expectations were agreed at a Wirral attendance forum in June 2018. From September 2019 we are ensuring that we work closely with the newly formed Wirral Attendance Service.

Pupils

- They will attend school regularly
- They will arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day
- They will discuss with their parents or class teacher any issues which are affecting their attendance.

Parents

- They will encourage their child to attend school and support the school's policies.
- They will contact the school office when their child is unable to attend and also send in a note to the teacher on their child's return

- They will ensure their child is appropriately dressed taking account of the school's uniform policy and is well prepared for the day

School

- Will provide a safe learning environment
- Will provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Will keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality
- Will contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence. Any unexplained absences will be followed up.
- Will encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of rewards and recognition
- Will refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Social Welfare Service

Current DfE Guidance

DfE Update guidance on 3rd August:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

From 3rd September we will record registers as per DfE guidance. Attendance is compulsory unless lockdown measures are introduced. DfE attendance guidance states:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

If there are pupils not able to attend because of clinical advice we will inform you and support these children with home learning. These children will have a risk assessment undertaken.

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as **code I** (illness). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms

Where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as **code C** if SLT approve or unauthorised absence as **code O** if SLT do not approve.

Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X. This includes children isolating because of positive tests, family symptoms, suspected symptoms, quarantine measures from travel, isolating because of local quarantine or other Covid-19 related incidents. More guidance at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>.

1. Key aims and Targets for 20-21 are:

- Minimise impact of Covid-19 on children's attendance, punctuality, well-being and achievement.
- Restore our school and ensure Continue to promote the importance of good attendance across the school to boost children's well-being, personal development and academic performance.
- Improve attendance for vulnerable pupils. Although this is improving, there is still a gap. Persistence absence for this group is double that of non-disadvantaged pupils. high (but improving). Very aware that this group have been most affected by Covid-19.
- Reduce further Persistence Absence (attendance below 90%) across the school. Ensure that families where children who have levels of persistent absence are effectively supported to improve their child's attendance. We will offer support top vulnerable families to help promote better attendance for all children.
- Strengthen multi agency partnerships. We want to maximise the opportunity presented by the emergence of Wirral Attendance Service.

Key Attendance Data Update

Have reported Covid figures but used February Half Term for last reliable whole school figure.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 Data	2019 -20 Data	Feb 2020 Data	National Average (2017- 18) figures)	2020-21 Target
All Children	95.5%	95.9%	95.9%	96.1%	96.3%	96.9%	95.2%	96.5%
Pupil Premium Children	93.4%	93.6%	93.4%	94%	95.1%	95.8%	94.3%	95.5%
Non-Pupil Premium Children	96.3%	96%	96.4%	96.6%	96.7%	97.2%	96.4%	96.8%
PP GAP	2.9%	2.4%	3%	2.6%	1.6%	1.4%	2.1%	1.3%
Boys	95.1%	95.7%	95.7%	96.3%	96.4%	97%	95.8%	96.5%
Girls	95.9%	96.1%	96%	95.9%	96.1%	96.9%	95.9%	96.5%
SEND	94.6%	94.1%	93.5%	95.8%	94.2%	94.8%	94.5%	95%

Note that although numbers are very low we also monitor attendance for EAL, LAC and service children.

Year Groups	Upto Feb 2020	
EYFS	96.2%	95.9%
Year 1	95.4%	96.4%
Year 2	96.7%	95.7%
Year 3	96.7%	97.3%
Year 4	96.4%	96.5%
Year 5	96.1%	96.6%
Year 6	95.8%	96.5%
Whole School	96.2%	96.9%

We track every year group for vulnerable groups to analyse trends. Attendance reviews take place with assistant heads and class teachers.

Covid 19 Adjustment

- **95% Attendance Without X Code**
- **96.5% with X Code**

Figure will be affected by bubble isolation/local infection rates etc. However, it reflects or intention to have children in school and not over use X code.

Persistence Absence

In 2016 DfE Changed the persistence absence benchmark to 90%.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	End Of 2019 Data	Feb 2020 Data	National Average	2020-21 Target
All Children	9.6%	8.6%	8.2%	53 pupils 6.5%	46 Pupils 5.5%⁰⁰	8.7%	6%
Pupil Premium Children	20.9%	17.2%	14%	12.4%	9.1%	15.7%	8%
Non-Pupil Premium Children	6.8%	7%	4.8%	6.3%	5.2%	6.9%	5.5%
GAP	14.1%	10.2%	9.2%	6.1%	3.9%⁰⁰	8.8%	2.5%

2. Monitoring Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are automatically checked using truancy call system and checked by the office staff at both sites.

The school day begins at 8.50 am on top site and 9.00am on lower site. **Has been adjusted for Covid-19 safety plan but will restart as soon as possible.** Doors open 10 minutes early so children are on time. Registers must be taken at specified time. Any child not in the classroom at this time will be marked as absent. Any child arriving after this time will need to be signed in at the school office and will be marked as late using an L in the register. The registers will close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence using a U in the register.

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and administration staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

Attendance officer and class teachers monitor attendance every week. The Head teacher and Assistant Head Teachers responsible for attendance, monitor the attendance of all pupils every half term.

If attendance drops below 90% a letter may be written informing parents/carers and the head may invite the parents to meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance.

- If there is no improvement the school will liaise with officers from Wirral Attendance Service and an advice letter will be sent.
- If concerns remain parents will be invited to an attendance panel review meeting with school staff and Wirral Education service.
- If we are concerned about a child's attendance, we reserve the right to mark absences as unauthorised without a medical certificate, even if the parent/carer reports that their child is ill.

- If a child attendance does not improve school may introduce daily monitoring of a child's attendance to ensure that they we are encouraging their attendance, praising any improvement and ensuring that we are intervening to promote the child's legal right to thrive. This will be done through a 5 for £5.00 reward scheme (see appendix C).
- If there is no further improvement school may apply legal sanctions through penalty warnings, fixed penalty notices and court action.

Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts. The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

3. Requesting Absence from School:

The Governing Body of the school fully adopt the change in regulations relating to school absence Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**.

The amendments make clear that Head teachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted

Holidays in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. This would be very rarely authorised. Examples may include leave from armed services, immediate family needs for a few days etc. **Covid-19 X codes will be monitored by attendance officer and head teacher to ensure they are applied correctly.**

Please note that holidays booked by other family members will not constitute exceptional circumstances. We understand that family weddings and events take place but would only authorise 1-2 days leave for such events.

We also recognise that some parents have restricted leave due to work restrictions. In these cases, we ask for a letter from the employer and will consider requests for a week's leave for exceptional circumstances.

We are actively working with the Local Authority to ensure that fixed term penalties are applied for unauthorised holiday leave. That can amount to £120 for each parent, per child. For a family of 2 adults and 2 children that could add up to £480. **In Covid-19 this measure will only be used as a final resort.**

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence, absence forms are available through the school office or the website

4. Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Head teacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Children may arrive at school from 8.40 at top site and 8.50am at lower site and go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. **Staggered times have been introduced for Covid-19.**

Registration **is currently closed at 8.50 am at top site and 9.10 am on lower site.** A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school. Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Head teacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to ESWO.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Attendance

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence not parents and it is a statutory requirement for the head teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time if this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip.

The codes for absences are included in each register. If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence.

Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed. Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

6. Applying Fixed Penalty Notices

School has a duty to apply legal proceedings to promote good attendance. We have fully adopted Wirral's fixed Penalty Notice. This is published on the school's website. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) will be applied and issued by Wirral Council where any of the following occur:

(A) The child has had 10 or more sessions of absence in a period of no more than one term or two half terms and meets the terms of prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and the Local Authority has previously issued a warning letter giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a 15 day period.

(B) The child has 10 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence in term time and the Headteacher has advised the parent in writing that the leave of absence does not constitute the Headteachers view of an exceptional circumstance.

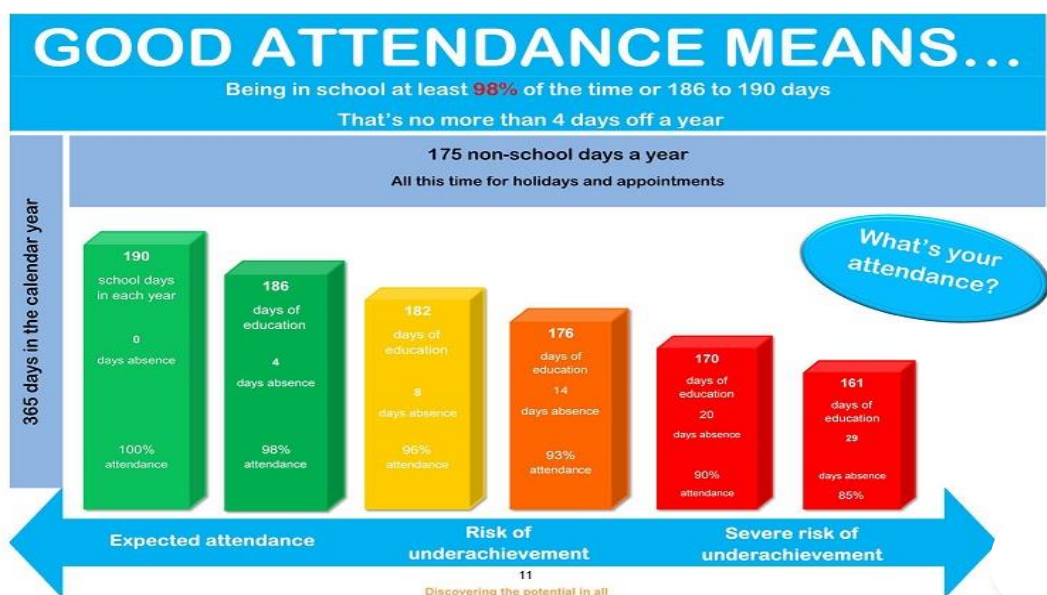
(C) The child has taken leave of absence in term time without parents requesting authorisation from the school.

(D) The child arrives late after the registers are closed (using code U) on 10 or more separate occasions in any one term

(E) An exclusion has taken place and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

In b), c) and d) subsequent unauthorised absence may not be subject to a penalty notice as the parent will be made aware that to repeat this would be committing an offence and the Local Authority may prosecute for a repeat offence.

In Covid-19 this measure will only be used as a final resort after consultation with Wirral's Attendance Officer.



Action	Staff Responsible	Timescale	Success Indicators	Evaluation
<p>1. Continue to Promote Positive attendance in the school community</p> <p>Ensure that we support children who need to access education remotely as part of X code provision.</p> <p>Maintain a class reward scheme for excellent attendance. 3 step reward scheme to celebration party.</p> <p>Maintain termly awards for improved attendance, 98%+ and 100% attendance. AHTs and Mr Cassidy have work with school council on outcomes and incentives for reward scheme.</p> <p>Have a 5 for £5.00 gift voucher scheme for all children on the monitoring system. Started after October Half Term.</p> <p>Organise a celebration for children who achieve 100%. Determined by Covid-19 Safety measures.</p> <p>Publish (half termly in newsletters) attendance figures for the school.</p>	<p>BC and ET</p> <p>BC and AHTs</p> <p>BC, SW and LH</p> <p>BC, AHTs and SW</p> <p>BC, AHTs and SW</p> <p>BC and SW</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Dec 2020</p> <p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Jan 2021</p> <p>Nov 2019</p>	<p>Sustain or secure improved attendance figures. Aim is 96.5%. Minimum expectation is national average. Include X code provision.</p> <p>Improved attendance for children with historic poor attendance (PA) figures</p> <p>Children will show improved understanding of the importance of good attendance (survey and feedback).</p> <p>Parents will communicate improved understanding of the importance of attendance (survey and parents forum)</p>	<p>Termly evaluations of that are shared with the Governing Body.</p> <p>Half Termly meetings between BC and ET.</p>
<p>2. Ensure that vulnerable groups are encouraged to have good attendance.</p> <p>Publish explicit targets.</p> <p>Track vulnerable children daily.</p> <p>Ensure attendance of vulnerable groups are discussed as part of 360 degree reviews and PPR for each class.</p>	<p>BC and Govs.</p> <p>JJ, KMc, JJ and ET</p> <p>SLT</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>Improved attendance figures. Aim is 96% excluding medical cases. Minimum expectation is 95.5%</p> <p>Reduce persistent absence to 8% for vulnerable groups (declining every year)</p>	<p>Reporting to governors on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Monitoring of vulnerable group targets by HT and attendance officer.</p>

Action	Staff Responsible	Timescale	Success Indicators	Evaluation
Target attendance for vulnerable children through learning mentors and AHTs. Ensure half termly reviews with Wirral Attendance Officer.	ET and BC and Wirral Att Officer	Sept 2020		360 degree reviews and PPR with class teachers.
<p>Improve the attendance figures for children causing concern (below 90%) through a dual strategy of support and monitoring for families.</p> <p>All children with attendance below 90% to be identified through Scholar Pack reports. Head Teacher and attendance officer to review attendance figures every half term with Wirral Attendance Officer. All Families to be contacted and offered support from the school to improve attendance. This will be at meeting/through phone call with HT, DHT or AHTs. Must agree positive steps forward. Apply new legal process if needed.</p> <p>This will be monitored weekly by our attendance officer or admin team in absence.</p> <p>All children with attendance below 85% who fail to improve will have to identify remote attendance panel with HT and Attendance Officer. Only seek legal redress in Covid-19 if it is unavoidable.</p> <p>Consequence of above is individual attendance plans are put in place were required. Also use Team Around the Child processes when required. Delegate learning mentor time to this.</p> <p>School office to undertake weekly monitoring for persistent offenders.</p>	BC, ET, AHTs and SW	Oct 2020	<p>Overall improved attendance figures for the school.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of persistent absence cases.</p> <p>Impact of new monitoring cards.</p> <p>Evidence that intervention improves attendance.</p>	<p>Regular updates to Governors on patterns of absence in school including cases of persistent absence.</p> <p>Wirral Attendance Service meetings</p> <p>Outcomes of attendance plans.</p>
	ET	Oct 2020		
	BC, ET, SW and Wirral Att Officer.	Nov 2020		
	BC, ET, HR	Nov 2020		
	KMc and JJ	Nov 2020		

Action	Staff Responsible	Timescale	Success Indicators	Evaluation
Wirral Attendance Officer to enforce attendance strategies when required. This includes the use of fixed penalty notices for persistent absence and poor punctuality.	BC	Dec 2020		

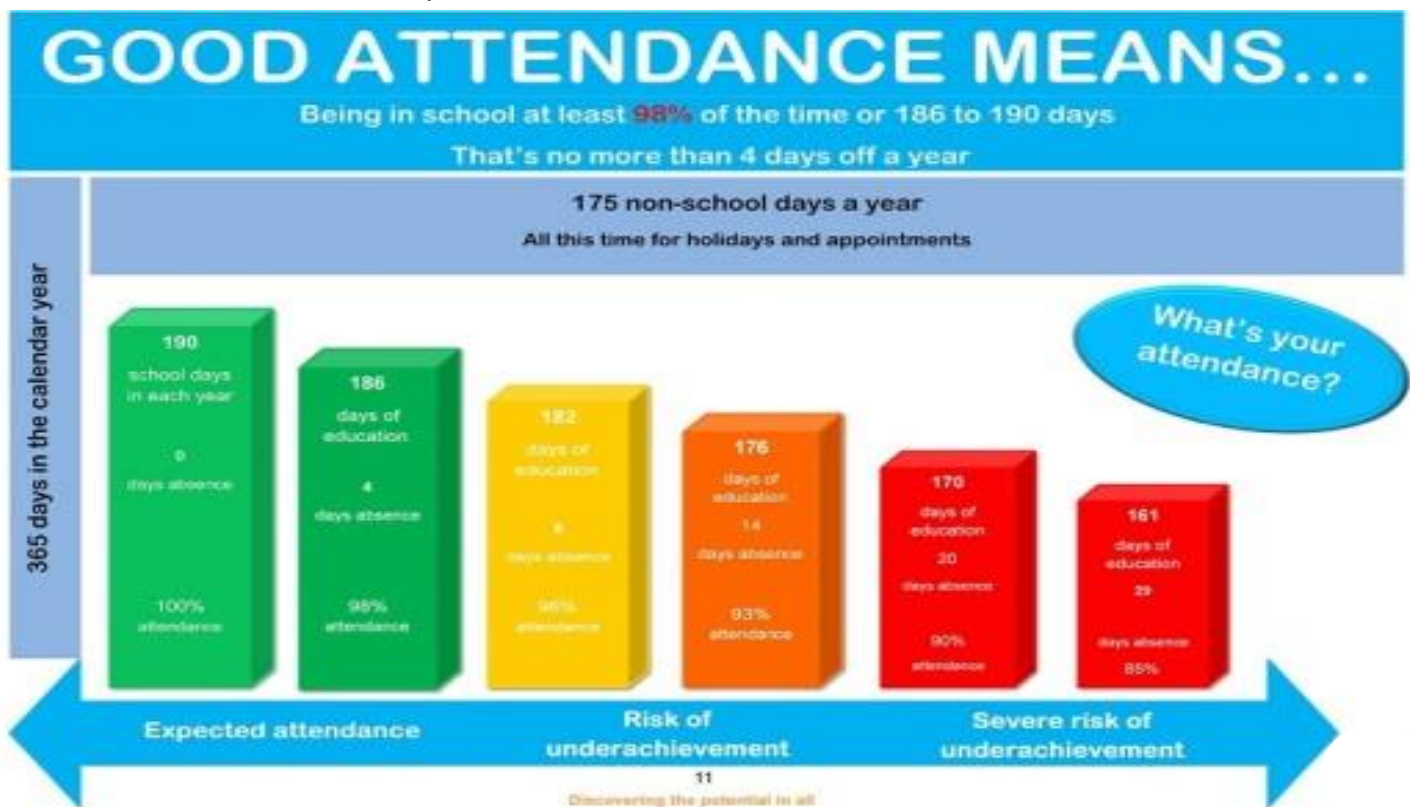
Action	Staff Responsible	Timescale	Success Indicators	Evaluation
<p>Improved administration of school attendance to improve the identification of absence patterns.</p> <p>Daily monitoring of all absences. Any unexplained absences checked at 9.30am. using Scholar Pack message system.</p> <p>Register and log kept on Scholar Pack. Includes all comms</p> <p>Weekly reports for any children causing concern to BC and ET.</p> <p>Recording of long term medical absences and use of X code with home-school support to recognise that these absences involve educational provision (in line with DfE and LA guidelines).</p> <p>Approved absences (educated off site for exams, approved sporting activities are correctly coded).</p> <p>Attendance record check in Feb and July with parents/carers for accuracy. Hope to use Scholar Pack parent app for this.</p>	<p>JJ and KMc</p> <p>ET, JJ and KMc</p> <p>ET</p> <p>JJ and KMc</p> <p>ET, JJ and KMc</p> <p>BC and SW</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p> <p>Sept 2019</p> <p>Feb 2021</p>	<p>More effective information on absence patterns provided to the head teacher and school governors.</p> <p>Impact of this will be more focused support when required.</p>	<p>Annual review of processes by the head teacher.</p> <p>Reporting to governors.</p> <p>Half Termly monitoring meetings BC, ET and SW.</p>

CONCERN LETTER (Appendix A)

Dear Parents/Carers of _____

I am writing to inform you that our records show that your child's current attendance for this academic year is currently _____. Any attendance below 90% is a significant cause for concern. Children with attendance below 90% are classified by the Department for Education as Persistence Absence. We have to report on action taken to reduce this to the Local Authority Educational Social Welfare officers and OFSTED.

We believe that consistent attendance at school is a key factor in helping your child to achieve the best possible standards. Good attendance is above 96%. The chart below explains the impact that your child's absence will have if this is not improved.



We do understand that genuine illness or other factors may be the main reason for your child's absence. We have to inform you of this concern but also want to offer any help and support. That support could come from within the school, our learning mentors, school nurse or other agency support.

Once a child's attendance drops below 90% it will be monitored. If it doesn't improve and you may be asked to come to a formal meeting called an attendance panel. These meetings take place once a term with the a senior member of staff, the learning mentor and the local education welfare officer.

The best way to avoid this is to work on improving attendance throughout the rest of the year. It is our duty, as a school, to monitor attendance and offer any support that may help to improve attendance. We have a learning mentor available for any parents/carers who would like support or advice. Mrs Broad can be contacted through the school office.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Cassidy and
Head Teacher

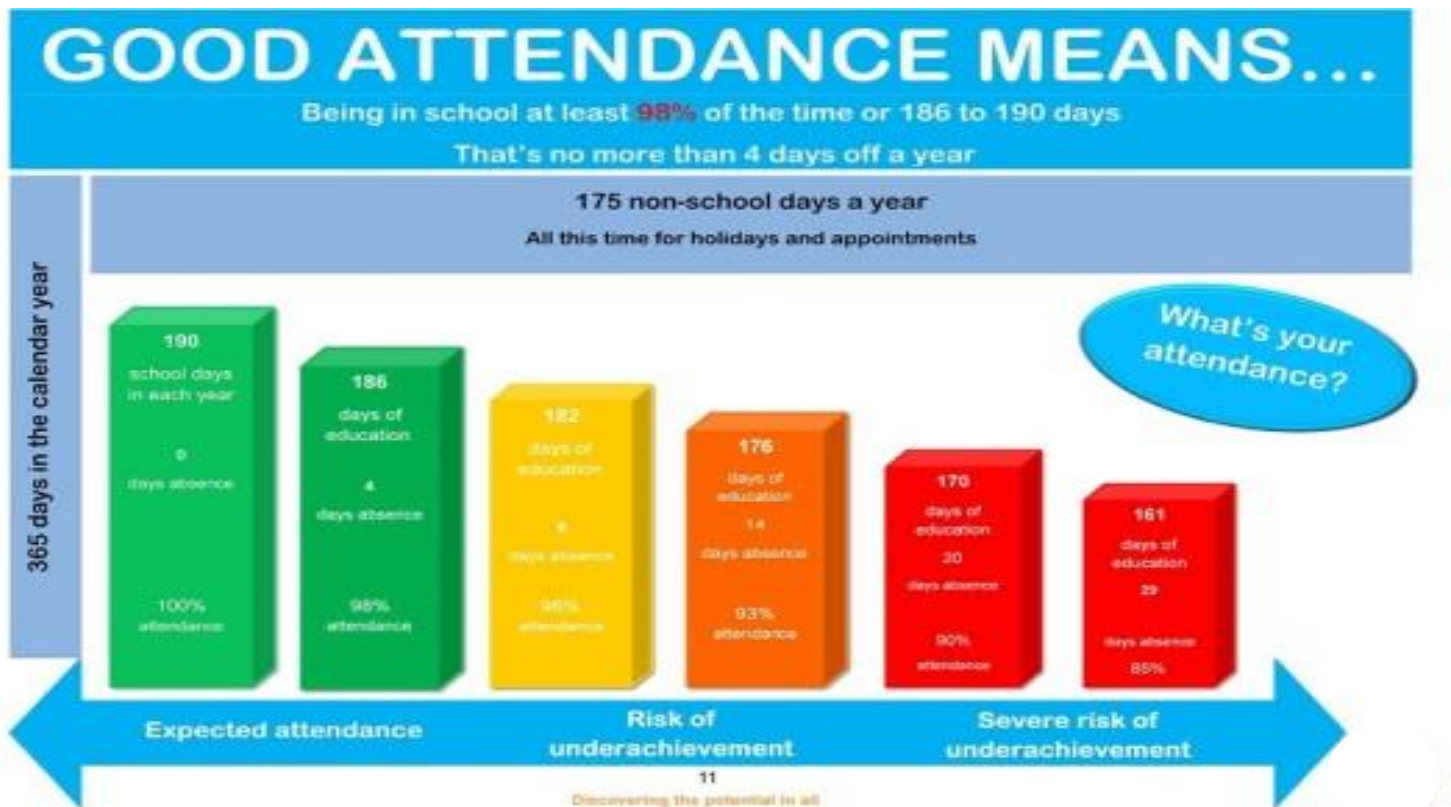
SIGNIFICANT CONCERN LETTER (Appendix B)

Dear Parents/Carers of _____

I am writing to inform you that our records show that your child's current attendance for this academic year is currently _____. Any attendance below 90% is a significant cause for concern. Children with attendance below 90% are classified by the Department for Education as Persistence Absence. We have to report on action taken to reduce this to the Local Authority Educational Social Welfare officers and OFSTED.

Your child's attendance is below 80%. This is a critical concern. Even if you have had a holiday this year the facts remain that your child's absence level is a significant area for concern in relation to their development at school.

We believe that consistent attendance at school is a key factor in helping your child to achieve the best possible standards. Good attendance is above 96%. The chart below explains the impact that your child's absence will have if this is not improved.



We do understand that genuine illness or other factors may be the main reason for your child's absence. We have to inform you of this concern but also want to offer any help and support. That support could come from within the school, our learning mentors, school nurse or other agency support.

Once a child's attendance drops below 90% it will be monitored. If it doesn't improve and you may be asked to come to a formal meeting called an attendance panel. These meetings take place once a term with the senior member of staff, the learning mentor and the local education welfare officer.

The best way to avoid this is to work on improving attendance throughout the rest of the year. It is our duty, as a school, to monitor attendance and offer any support that may help to improve attendance.

We would like to arrange a meeting for you with a senior member of staff to discuss your child's attendance and how we can improve this. Please contact Mrs Walters the PA to the senior leadership team to arrange this appointment. Mrs Walters can be contacted on 01516386014, through a letter or via e-mail. Her e-mail address is: susan.walters@stgeorges.wirral.sch.uk

If you would like some immediate support we have a learning mentor available for any parents/carers who would like support or advice. Mrs Broad can be contacted through the school office.
















Yours sincerely
















Mr Bernard Cassidy
Head Teacher

Mrs Emma Taylor
Attendance Officer

5 for Five Card (Appendix C)

Child's Name:		Teacher:	
Class:		Date (Week Beginning):	

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Morning		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!
		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!
		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
After-noon		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!		In school and on time!
		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!		In school today!
		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!		We missed you today!

Did you make it into the 5 for £5.00 raffle?	Yes	No
Did you get to visit the prize box?	Yes	No
How do you feel this week?		
Comment by senior member of staff		

