



# Attendance Guidance

2017 – 2018

*We Care, We Pray, We Achieve*

Review Date: July 2017

## Introduction

Attendance at St. Matthew's has improved year on year, this is due to the high expectations set of all those in our community. We aim to improve this further to ensure we are above national expectations for overall attendance. To do this we aim to create an environment where every student wants to attend school every day throughout the year. For all our students to achieve their very best and reach their potential it is vital that they attend regularly and on time.

This guidance sets out how we can work together to achieve this.

## Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence from school disrupts the learning pattern of students. One day's absence can put a student behind in five lessons and causes misunderstanding to occur in the next lesson. This causes learning to be lost which can never be gained back at the same level of expertise. In some lessons, where group work is vital, the learning of other students is also hindered. This is particular acute in years 10 and 11.

Ensuring your child attends school every day is your legal responsibility. Permitting absence without good reason could result in fines or prosecution. - It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Act to fail to secure the regular attendance at school of a child who is a registered pupil at the school. On conviction, the magistrates' court may impose a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months, or both. In addition, you would obtain a criminal record.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: the school, parents, carers and students. To help us all in this, as a school we will:

- Report to you at least three times a year on where your child's attendance is at and how this is impacting on their progress.
- Celebrate 100% and improving attendance through assemblies and the annual awards evening.
- Reward 100% and improving attendance through weekly checks, and text messages.
- This diamond is displayed in all classrooms and forms the basis of discussions with your child. Encouraging your child to stay green is important for their overall progress in school.



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

## SEPTEMBER → JULY

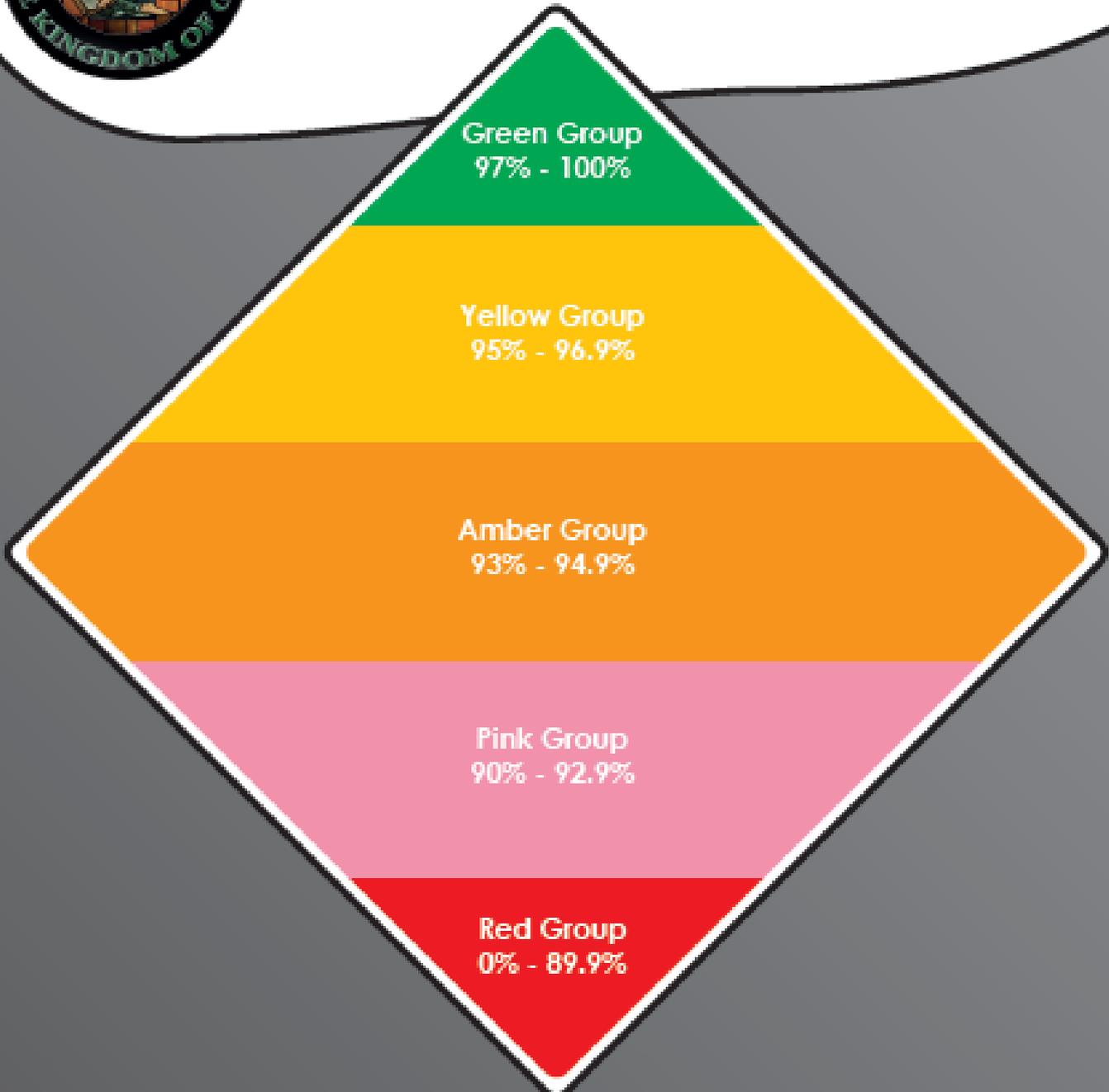
WE PRAY - WE CARE - WE ACHIEVE

100%	0 DAYS	0 LESSONS MISSED
99%	1 DAY	5 LESSONS MISSED
98%	3 DAYS	15 LESSONS MISSED
97%	1 WEEK	25 LESSONS MISSED
96%	1.5 WEEKS	35 LESSONS MISSED
94%	2 WEEKS	50 LESSONS MISSED
93%	2.5 WEEKS	65 LESSONS MISSED
92%	3 WEEKS	75 LESSONS MISSED
90%	3.5 WEEKS	90 LESSONS MISSED

**MAXIMISE YOUR POTENTIAL**  
**ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY**



# St Matthew's RC High School Attendance Diamond



## Attendance Groups

Green - No Risk

Yellow - Risk of underachievement

Amber - Serious risk of underachievement

Pink - Severe risk of underachievement

Red - Extreme risk - Court action

## Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing. The Attendance Team will decide based on the information provided whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or another unavoidable cause.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences includes:
  - Parents/guardians keeping children off school without an acceptable reason
  - Truancy before or during the school day
  - Absences which have never been explained
  - Students who arrive at school after 9am
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
  - Day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absence (PA, 10% absence or attendance of 90% or below):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, in particular through the Pastoral team and your child's Pastoral manager. You may receive a visit from a member of the team, a letter to inform you that your child is getting close to the PA mark or child may be placed on an attendance monitoring report.

Any absence resulting in attendance of 90% or below, regardless of the circumstances is a serious concern and may result in St. Matthew's taking further action.

## Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school, in particular the Attendance Team, on the first day of absence.
- Contact school on any further days of absence.
- On your child's return to school, provide a letter explaining the absence or a medical note. This must be provided even if you have telephoned the school.

If your child is absent, the school will:

- Telephone you or text you on the first day of absence if you haven't contacted school.
- Visit you at home on, or before the third day of absence.
- If your child has been off previously, the home visit may be on the first day of absence if you haven't contacted school.
- Invite you in for a meeting to discuss absences if absences are a regular occurrence.
- Remind you of regular attendance and where your child is at if it falls to 90% through a letter.
- Send fines home for attendance causing concern or for unauthorised leave of absence
- Refer you to the Local authority for prosecution if your child's attendance shows no improvement despite attempts to resolve concerns with you.
- On your Child's return to school the Form Tutor or Pastoral Manager will complete a return to school form with them.

### Telephone numbers:

To ensure your child's absence is reported to you quickly, please ensure you keep the school informed of any telephone changes. It is helpful for a mobile number so that texts can be sent.

## Requests for leave of absence

Taking holidays in term time is not permitted. You may request time off by completing a written letter to the Head teacher. In exceptional circumstances, the Head teacher may agree to authorise a holiday. All other requests will be denied.

In addition to holidays, parents may see it fit to request to take their child out of school during term time for other reasons. The Head teacher may not grant leave unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- Death of parent / guardian or sibling of the student
- Life threatening or critical illness of the parent or sibling
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time

- Leave of absence granted at a previous school within the last six months (supporting documentation from the previous school is required)

The Headteacher will consider the circumstances the leave is being requested for along with the following factors:

- Student's current attendance record
- Year group the student is in
- How close to examinations the request falls
- The duration of the absence

All requests should be handed in to the Attendance Officer who will contact the parent / guardian with the final decision made.

## **Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable, to school or to lessons. Late students disrupts the learning of those around them and the late student themselves misses vital explanations of the day's work. A student who is only 5 minutes late to each lesson, misses three and half weeks of learning each year – learning which is lost and can never be made up for.

### **Late to school:**

The first session of the school day begins at 8.25 am, therefore all student are expected to be in school ready to start this session at 8.20 am. Any student who arrives after 8.30am will be signed in late for school. This will result in an automatic 30 minute detention the same day after school. You will be informed of this detention via a text message.