

ST. MARY'S C.E. (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy has been written following consultation with school staff, governors, parents, the education welfare officer and other school support services. It has been written following L.A. guidance and with reference to DfE Guidance on ensuring regular school attendance.

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. The staff at St. Mary's Primary School take seriously their responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning and undermines educational progress, not only for the child who is absent but also for the rest of the class. It can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. It is vital that children feel their presence in school is important and that they are missed when absent or late.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

AIMS

- To maximise the attendance of all pupils.
- To provide a positive and welcoming environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parent and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To work closely with and make full use of support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service if necessary and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- Parents
 - To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
 - To offer a reason for any period of absence or lateness.
 - To telephone school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to give a reason for the absence.
 - To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. To take family holidays during school holiday periods, unless there are exceptional circumstances for an annual family holiday during term time.
 - To support their child in maintaining high levels of attendance and recognising their successes and achievements.
- Governors
 - To set annual targets for attendance.
 - To monitor progress towards these annual targets for attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- Headteacher
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.

- To work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To communicate with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality.
 - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
 - To make appropriate judgements as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Class Teacher
 - To maintain class registers accurately, providing an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
 - To raise any issues which may affect a child's attendance with the Headteacher
 - To raise any concerns re. a child's attendance, including lateness and late pick ups, with the Headteacher
- Office Staff
 - To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers by 10.00am on the first day of a child's absence to establish the reason.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory written record for every absence has been established for every child.
 - To record the reasons for absence in the register recording list.
 - To liaise with the Headteacher about whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Education Welfare Office (EWO)
 - To enforce the legal requirements of school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

ADMINISTRATION

- The school uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor data in order to carry out its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents/carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE

Lateness

- The school day starts at 8.50am and children can enter school from 8.45am.
- The playground gate is unlocked at 8.40 am.

- Children must be met promptly at the end of the school day: 3.15pm for Reception and KS1 and 3.20 pm for KS2. There is no provision for school staff to supervise a child who is not collected on time and they have no responsibility to do so.
- Pupils arriving after the register has closed (8:55am) will be considered as late.
- Pupils arriving after these times must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as absent (unauthorised)
- If a child is repeatedly late for school, parents will be contacted to remind them of their responsibilities and a letter may be sent. If the lateness continues, the matter will be referred to the EWO for further action.

Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and the approximate day a child is likely to return to school. Parents/carers should provide a written explanation on their child's return to school. This may be by email.
- Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher should be informed.
- Absence should be reported to the school office by telephone, in person or by email. The office staff do not have access to Class Dojo so absence should not be reported this way.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments five working days in advance, with a copy of the official appointment card/letter.
- A last minute or emergency appointment still needs to be authorised by the Head or in her absence the Deputy Head. This can be done personally or by phone before collecting the child. A copy of the appointment card is to be sent into school as soon as possible, otherwise this will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Leave of absence during Term Time

Absence during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents are advised that holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods.

Applications during term time must be made in writing; stating the reason for the absence being taken during term time, the first date of absence and the date of return.

Cheaper or more convenient flights, holiday price, holidays with relatives, not checking the school's term dates will not be seen as reasons for authorisation of a term time absence. This is in line with Trafford Guidance. A 'Family Holidays in Term Time' leaflet is available from the school office.

Special Circumstances

Absence of a pupil on days that are exclusively set aside for religious observance in their particular faith will be recorded as a special circumstance absence.

Absence for a birthday or a shopping trip will not be authorised. Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and a plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.

Term time absence for other specific purposes

(e.g. external examinations, elite sports, performing arts)

For authorisation of a single absence to be considered, a written request must be made at least five working days in advance and be accompanied by written confirmation from the organising body. For

any subsequent request, an appointment to discuss will need to be made with the Headteacher. The classteacher will set work on request but the parent needs to be aware that this is not a full teaching and learning experience and that units of work may be missed that will not be repeated.

Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, parents have a duty to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice issued by the Education Welfare Service.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

All absences both authorised, unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year as part of their child's annual report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark to their child's attendance to other children in the school and nationally, the following grades will be used:

98% - 100%	Excellent
95% - 97.9%	Good
90% - 94.9%	Unsatisfactory
85% - 89.9%	Poor
Under 85%	Very poor

STRATEGIES USED TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that all pupils felt that they can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance data will be collected half termly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:
 - Incomplete weeks
 - Patterns of absence (e.g. same day absences)
 - Lateness
 - Periods of extended absence
 - Periods of unauthorised absence
 - All children with attendance below 90%
- The Headteacher and the Governing Body will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually.

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