

# St Mary's C. E. Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2015/2016



**National Standard**  
for Enterprise  
Education



**tes** 2013  
schools  
awards  
**WINNER**  
Enterprise and  
Community Award

**tes** 2014  
schools  
awards  
**WINNER**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
OF THE YEAR



## **Introduction**

St. Mary's is a right respecting school. We are an enterprising school with an enterprising staff, governing body and community. St. Mary's believes that the highest levels of attendance enable children to achieve and excel. It is every child's right:

**To become the best that they can be**

**To learn and go to school**

Excellent attendance is fundamental to these rights.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to Education Laws and this policy is written within this context.

**This policy will aim to:**

- demonstrate a strong attendance ethos;
- have a clear policy on absence;
- have effective, non-bureaucratic systems for monitoring attendance;
- use attendance data and other information to improve school/academy and pupil performance;
- promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers;
- intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern;
- have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils;
- reward and celebrate good and improved attendance;
- make best use of additional support for pupils and parents/carers with greatest need.

## **Legal Interventions**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and respond to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.

### **Parenting Contracts** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent/carer. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to the family and is intended to offer support to families and resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

### **Penalty Notices** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

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

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

## **Categorising Absence**

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer.

## **Punctuality**

All students are expected to arrive at school by 8.45am to line up. Morning registration takes place at 8.50am – 9.10 a.m. Students arriving after registration period but before the register closes at 9.30am will be marked with an 'L' code which is statistically a present. Registers close at 9.30am. Any student arriving late to school after the register has closed will be given a 'U' code which is statistically an unauthorised absence.

## **Illness**

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

## **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to St Mary's C E Primary School to confirm the appointment.

## **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

## **Leave of absence**

Leave of absence will not be granted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted.

## **Religious Observance**

St Mary's C E Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

The current Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 does not allow for a school to delete a pupil from the admission register where the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age and has failed to meet the academic requirements for entry to their sixth-form.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will allow this, thus bringing the regulations into line with the new School Admissions Code 2012, which allows schools to set academic requirements for entry into sixth form.

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

### **School Finishing Time**

School closes at 3.15pm. Arrangements should be made for pupils to be collected promptly or ensure that school has been informed that permission has been given by the parent/carer for the child to make their own way home. St Mary's C E Primary School encourages afterschool clubs and parents will be informed if their child is chosen to attend one of these clubs. Failure to collect a pupil on a regular basis may precipitate further action or referral to support agencies if causing concern.

**St Mary's C E Primary School believes that improving school attendance will involve a whole school approach with every member of the school community having a role to play as a member of staff, a governor, a pupil or a parent.**

At St Mary's C E Primary School, Mrs. J McGarry, Head Teacher, is the senior manager who leads on attendance. The HeadTeacher and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for attendance. The day to day responsibility for managing attendance lies with Mrs. C Nevin, Admissions Officer.

Attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and Department for Education annually through the census and to the Governing Body termly. This information is collected through the SIMS system.

The **Governing Body** will support the school in promoting good attendance by:

- Reviewing whole school and persistent absence data at termly meetings
- Undertaking an annual target setting meeting each Autumn term with reference to the school's Self Evaluation Form and Raising Attainment Plan
- Providing funds to enable the implementation and maintenance of a school reward system for good and improved attendance
- Having a named Governor with responsibility for attendance.

The **Senior Leadership Team** aim to ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that the whole school is involved in reinforcing good attendance through:

- Disseminating the Attendance Policy to all staff
- Promoting the importance of good attendance to parents and students through regular whole school letters and information sent home and by issuing a parent friendly copy of the attendance policy.
- Seeking to promote the importance of good attendance to students and parents during assemblies and at parent events.
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for students.
- Delivering informative lessons that are set to students' needs.
- Providing extracurricular activities.
- Encouraging parental involvement in school life.
- Promoting and rewarding good attendance.
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy annually and updated all staff at regular meetings
- Ensuring the attendance team receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil its day to day duties
- Ensuring the school has in place strategies for collecting and analysing attendance data.

- Report back attendance data to the Local Authority, DFE and the school Governing Body as required.
- Encourage the sharing of good practice between staff for good attendance
- Keeping attendance high profile within school and at staff meetings.
- Undertaking Pupil Progress meetings with class teachers

The Admissions Officer has strategies in place for recording, monitoring and responding to students with attendance concerns.

The courses of action for responding to students with unexplained/unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality can be viewed in full in the Appendix.

We will contact parents and invite them in for an attendance panel to discuss how we can work together to support their child if they are showing attendance concerns.

The **Admissions Officer** will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- First day calling
- Daily scrutiny of absent students.
- Authorising Absence
- Assessing requests for leave of absence in term time
- Punctuality concerns
- Penalty Notice Procedure
- Fast track process for students with poor attendance
- Keeping accurate records of contact and interventions used.
- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Discussing with pastoral staff individual Action Plans for pupils causing concern
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Inviting parent/carers in for attendance panels to discuss relevant support
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies and the Local Authority as required
- Fortnightly meetings with the Senior Management Team to discuss on track PA pupils and pupils whose attendance is cause for concern.
- Co-ordinate walking bus

The **Teaching and Support Staff Team** will support and promote good attendance by:

- Ensuring accurate records are kept such as pupil registers
- Inserting comments in the register if reasons for absence established



- Highlighting to the Admissions Officer and Senior Leadership Team any pupils causing concern
- Talking to their class about the importance of good attendance
- Promoting whole school initiatives, reward schemes and celebrations
- Delivering a diverse curriculum in a child centered learning environment

The **Parents/Carers** of our students are asked to support the school and instill the value of education and regular attendance by:

- Talking to their child about school life and taking a positive interest in their child's educational progress.
- Contacting the school if their child is absent to let us know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- avoiding unnecessary absences – wherever possible making medical appointments outside of school hours and providing medical appointment cards
- Asking the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties and informing the school of any circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Ensuring their child attends punctually everyday
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the school if their child's attendance becomes highlighted as a cause for concern

The school informs parents/carers and students about their expectations in respect of punctual and regular attendance through distribution of a parent friendly policy and newsletters. The school website and parent policy also informs parents about their legal responsibilities.

## **Strategies for promoting good whole school attendance**

- Updating the whole school community about attendance matters through the school Website and newsletters
- Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Rewarding achievements through class assemblies, certificates rewards and extra-curricular activities
- Walking Bus for identified pupils
- The whole school integrated reward initiative
- An Attendance Banding system which reinforces the school's positive attainment ethos
  - 98% + = Green
  - 95% - 97.9% = Amber, some cause for concern
  - Below 95%, Attendance at this level could trigger a school and multi-agency intervention. 90% and below = Persistent Absence

## **Strategies for supporting and tackling unsatisfactory attendance**

- First day calling procedure
- Breakfast and after school clubs
- Late Gate and Blitz day initiatives
- Walking Bus
- Implementing a standardised and escalating series of school warning letters
- Home Visits
- Individual Action Plans
- Referral to support agencies
- Attendance Panel meetings
- Caseworking of identified pupils/families
- Referral to School Nurse where medical issues are a concern
- Parenting contracts with agreed targets
- Issuing of Penalty Notices
- Referral to Local Authority for consideration of implementing legal proceedings

## **Attendance Protocols**

A pupil's absence from school has a direct impact on their ability to learn and as such St Mary's C E Primary School aims to promote full attendance of all its pupils throughout the whole school year.

### **Absence procedure**

If a child is unavoidably absent from school the parent or carer must:

- Contact school by phone as soon as possible on the first day of absence identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return and
- Send a note on the first day of return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even after you have telephoned us

If a child is absent from school we will:

- make a telephone call to establish a reason

In certain circumstances we may also:

- Visit your home
- Invite you to discuss the situation in school
- Issue a Penalty Notice and/or legal proceedings warning letter
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency or the Local Authority

## **Late arrival at school**

At St Mary's C E Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

The school day begins at precisely 8.50am and we advise all parents and carers to ensure their child is on site prior to this. Provision will be made each day for children to be supervised by a member of staff from 8:40am.

The school register will be taken between 9am and 9.10am. All pupils arriving after this time will be expected to report to the main office where their arrival will be recorded as late in the register and the parent or carer will be asked to provide a reason for the late arrival.

The school register will officially close at 9:30am. All pupils arriving on or after this time must report to the school office and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised for the morning session and parents or carers will be asked to provide a reason for the late arrival. Late cards will be issued to give to the class teacher and to ensure that the student has been recorded as present in school. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in referral to the senior management team and may also result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings.

## **Leave of absence for holidays in term time**

Recent DfE guidance, *School attendance/ Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013*, says that headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. St Mary's C E Primary School will follow this guidance with all applications being required in advance and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances before leave of absence in term time would be authorised. Parent/carers must complete a request form for leave of absence with an accompanying letter explaining the exceptional circumstances relating to the period. School will respond in writing to this request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the HeadTeacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Leave in term time is not a parental right and every effort should be made to avoid absence for holidays as it is recognised that a pupil who takes 10 days holiday in term time will only be able to achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance for the full academic year.

The DfE guidance states that if a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval so if parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

St Mary's C E Primary School acknowledges all absences result in lost learning and directly affects a child's education. As such, applications for leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice, and where a pupil's attendance for the previous academic year reached the school target. Parents will need to make a written request prior to the dates requested. School will send a written reply confirming whether the absence will be authorised or not.

The law stipulates that the cost of a holiday is not reasonable grounds for claiming exceptional circumstance.

Where applications for leave of absence in term time are refused and families take the holiday without authorisation, a penalty notice may be requested for each parent for each child. A penalty notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days.

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. If a pupil is absent for 38 sessions or 19 days of absence they will be categorised as persistently absent. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

All pupils who are PA, or are considered to be on track to becoming PA will be referred to the school's senior management Team and may also be referred to appropriate external agencies for targeted support. The Local Authority will automatically be notified of all PA pupils.

The school may consider the issuing of a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failure to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

**St Mary's C E Primary School holds an aspirational target of 100% for pupil attendance because we know that good attendance is the key to effective schooling and unlocking the true potential of each and every child.**

For the academic year 2015-2016 St Mary's C E Primary School's Governing Body has set a minimum target of 98% attendance. Throughout the school year we will monitor absences and punctuality to highlight where improvements can be made.

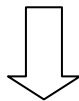
## Protocol for responding to pupils who are Late at St Mary's C E Primary School

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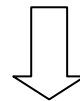
Pupil has been late on three occasions - letter to parents/carers. (Admissions Officer, Carol)  
Registration is at 8.50 to 9:00 a.m. The registers will close at 9:30a.m. Pupils arriving after close of register will be marked as having unauthorised absence U.



Following the issue of letter - if further late marks are recorded parents/carers should be invited to an attendance panel (monitored for 3 week period). Parents warned about risk of being issued Penalty Notice fine for lates that are recorded after the close of register.



Following the attendance panel, if the pupil records further unauthorised absence (late after the close of register) a Penalty Notice Warning letter to be issued. Any further unauthorised late/absence should result in school requesting Local Authority issue Penalty Notice. Penalty Notice warning letter must be signed by Head teacher. (Identified by Admissions Officer and at fortnightly meetings)



Following the attendance panel, school may decide to instigate other strategies for tackling issue surrounding lateness.

For example:

- Additional support from school offered to pupil and/or parent.
- Parenting contracts
- MCAF
- Referral/information given about support services

Pupils who arrive after registration will be required to come to the office to be signed in and given a late card to present to the class teacher to ensure they have been recorded as present in the school  
Parent/carers will be asked for the reason for lateness and to sign the late book.

Classes who arrive on time will be acknowledged and displayed in the office.

## Unexplained absence

**Pupil is marked absent from registration  
No contact from parent/carer to explain absence**



**Admissions Officer will telephone the numbers  
provided by parents/carers  
All contact will be logged on SIMS.**



**Parent/carer no contact  
Call is logged**

**Admissions Officer will  
speak to other school  
staff to see if reasons  
for absence have been  
given. Safeguarding  
procedures followed  
where there are**



**If no reasons have been given the  
Admissions Officer will discuss with  
pastoral lead and Head Teacher regarding  
the appropriateness to carry out a home  
visit to the property. If there is no answer a  
note will be left asking for the parent/carer  
to make contact.**



**No contact from parent/carer.**

**Follow Safeguarding procedures/CME  
procedures**



**Further unauthorised absences may result in  
Penalty notice warning letter being sent**



**Parent/carer provides  
reason for absence**

**Appropriate registration  
mark will be entered on  
SIMS**

