



St. Mary's Attendance Policy
(Policies related to this: Behaviour, Discipline, and Anti-Bullying)

“I am the way, the truth and the life.”
(John 14:6)

St Mary's is a Catholic Primary School.
We place our children at the heart of all we do,
inspired by the love, life and teachings of Jesus
and the Catholic Christian Church.

ATTENDANCE

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th 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.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

From September 2013 there have been amendments to the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration 2006) Act. These amendments remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Whilst we understand that some absences may include times when a child is ill or attending appointments, preferably out of school time, it is important that school and home work together to try to ensure that all children have the best possible chance of success whilst at school.

(Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the

start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.)

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

- All children should be ready to come into school from **8.45 a.m.** to **8:55am** each day. The register is taken twice a day at **9.00am and 1.00pm or 1:30pm for Years 5 and 6**. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.10a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as **Late**. After 9.30 a.m. this will become an **Unauthorised Absence** unless a reason has been given which can be authorised.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed by 9.15am of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. After 9.15am the school will telephone parents to clarify reasons for absence if no notification has been received

Definitions

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

Authorised Absence - An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school because it is their birthday during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence)

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the electronic register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian on the first day of absence, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.

- Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.15a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- When a child with a Child Protection Plan is absent, parents will be contacted on the first day, and where unable to get a response social care will be informed.
- If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school would contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. The School Secretary will keep a record of the contacts made.

COMPLETING THE REGISTER

The marking of registers is an important part of the school day. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils and **may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They may also contribute to pupils end of term reports and to records of achievement.

Registration is completed at St Mary's electronically, using SIMs.net. and logging onto the attendance module. The following symbols are used;-

/	Present
U	Unauthorised absence
N	absent if no reason given
B	Educated off site (by agreement with HT))
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit (e.g. music exam)
O	Unauthorised
H	Family holiday agreed
G	Family holiday not agreed
S	Extended family holiday agreed

Registration takes place at the beginning of each morning or afternoon session. Pupils who are absent are initially marked with N until the reason for their absence is ascertained.

To ensure the safety of all pupils in the event of fire or emergency evacuation, teachers/teaching assistants will also complete a hard copy of daily registration. These hard copies can then be used to check quickly in the event of fire or another emergency that all pupils are accounted for.

The hard copies should be completed in black pen using the above symbols and ensuring the correct date is recorded. If a teacher knows the reason for absence, they may complete the appropriate symbols on the hard copy.

Registers are collected by Year 6 and taken to the school office, where the secretary will complete the electronic entries, after checking if any recorded telephone messages regarding a child's absence, have been left.

HOLIDAYS

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are strongly advised not to do so. Whilst requests for 'exceptional leave' will be considered on an individual basis, those that do not meet the requirements of the Department for Education's guidelines cannot be granted and the Falmouth Schools Partnership will not permit (holiday) leave:

- where pupils'/students' attendance in the current term and over the previous two terms is less than 95%
- where pupils'/students' have a poor record of punctuality and/or need to catch up on work
- if any leave has been granted previously during the same school year
- during the month of September
- during ANY examination/assessment period, including mock exams and/or SATs
- for students in years 10 and 11 (*this applies to Falmouth School only*)

All requests for leave of absence must be made via the relevant form (see Appendix 1, paper copies are available from the school office) and will be responded to in writing. **This form must be completed and returned to the school at least four weeks prior to the exceptional leave of absence.**

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, the school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases parents may be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time, without consent from the school, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and Cornwall Councils Code of Conduct regarding Penalty Notices.

Only in exceptional circumstances will absences be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified.

- All holiday requests should be completed on the 'Exceptional Leave' request form before any bookings are made.
- An absence for holiday that has not been agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised and the local authority may consider prosecuting.
- Authorisation will **not** be granted retrospectively.
- **Holiday requests will not be granted if the absence will push the child's attendance below 95% for the academic year.**

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MAY CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; to attend a funeral or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.

To take holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and will be reported to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the EWO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The school has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

Pupils at the end of each term will be issued with 'Traffic Light' attendance certificates. The meaning for each colour is explained below:

- **GREEN – Congratulations! Your child's attendance is at national average or above.**
- **ORANGE –** Your child is attending below the national average. If you would like an appointment to discuss ways to improve this with the Education Welfare Officer, please contact the school.
- **RED –** Your child's attendance is below 90% and an appointment has been made for you to meet with Mrs Jarman and Mrs Scarborough, Education Welfare Officer (please see below).

All the children who have close to or achieve 100% attendance in any half term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in assembly. Orange and red certificates will be sent home in the satchel post. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% for a whole year

which will be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term. If a child achieves 100% attendance for their entire time at school (i.e. seven years) they will be awarded with an engraved cup. A reward will be given each term to the class with the best overall performance (e.g. additional playtime).

LATENESS

School begins at 9.00 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Pupils are encouraged to arrive from 8:45am and go to their classrooms. Any child arriving later than 9.00 a.m. should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

Registers will close at 9:30am. Any child arriving after 9:30am without explanation for the lateness, will be coded U (unauthorised).

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible by telephone, why your child is away.
- Send a note when your child returns to school.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer term general worry about the attendance of

a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- The Education Welfare Officer and Education Welfare Assistant will meet with the Headteacher termly to discuss any concerns about individual pupils or families.

Policy Reviewed: Autumn 2018

To be reviewed: Autumn 2020

