



ST. MARY'S

Attendance Policy

St Mary's CE (A) Primary School

2017-2018

Our school is committed to providing a stimulating and enjoyable education experience for all pupils. We, therefore, believe that if pupils are to benefit from the education we offer, good attendance is crucial. We will actively promote, encourage and celebrate full and/or improved attendance. Parents have a vital role to play in this, and we will establish strong home-school links and communications with them.

Our Vision and Mission Statement

We are a learning school.

Here at St Mary's we 'Reach for the Stars' because we believe that learning is without limits.

Intelligence is learnable and every child can achieve.

Success is about changing children's lives.

We have high expectations of the children and ourselves.

The staff strive to be the best so that they can help the children to be the best they can be.

Introduction

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.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, 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 an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Targets

Our attendance target for 2015/16 was 95%. For 2016/17 our overall attendance target is 96%.

Responsibilities and Processes, Parents and Carers Responsibilities

We have an open door policy, where doors are opened at 8.45 a.m. School commences **at 8.55 a.m.**, and it is therefore essential that all children arrive on time ready for lessons.

School closing times. Foundation Unit 3.00pm, KS1 3.10 p.m, KS2 3.20 p.m. Parents and carers must ensure that their child is collected on time.

If not then there will be a 10 minute leniency period for unforeseen circumstances, but after this time there will be a £2 charge encored.

In our school prospectus and guidelines, we ask parents to contact school on the first day of a child's absence to inform us of the cause. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending school, parents/carers should notify school between 8.45 a.m. - 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence or as soon as is reasonably practicable, by telephone message or in person. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Attendance issues will be raised with parents through letters, newsletters, parents' evenings, Prospectus or, in more serious cases, via the Home School Link Worker and the Education Welfare Service.

School Register Procedures

1. School attendance registers must be promptly marked at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If there is a discrepancy (e.g. if a child fails to return for the afternoon session), inform the Headteacher or deputy Headteacher immediately.
2. Please make sure that the correct symbols are used when marking registers.
3. The Home School Link Worker completes reasons for absence on the SIMs attendance system.
4. A telephone call or a personal visit from a parent or other responsible adult will be acceptable. If no contact has been made our Home School Link Worker operates a 'first day telephone call' or 'text message' to the parents to provide a reason for absence.

Attendance information from the registers is recorded weekly onto the computerised administration system (SIMS.net). Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the appropriate Governing Body of attendance and punctuality trends. The information will enable Governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary.

The Headteacher and deputy head teacher in liaison with the Home School Link Worker and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory.

We maintain a close working relationship with the Education Welfare Service via the EWO. Regular meetings take place and various strategies are considered. In cases where no improvements have been affected by internal action, the school will request the EWO make a home visit or hold an attendance clinic.

Definitions:

- **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, the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

- **Authorised Holiday Absence - May half term**

In order to give families the opportunity to take advantage of cheaper holidays, the week before May half term will be authorised.

- **Unauthorised Absence**

No holidays requested during term time are authorised, unless under exceptional circumstances.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent

Application for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances in term time

The Governing Body requests that parents make every effort not to arrange holidays during term-time.

No holidays requested during term time (excluding the week before May half term, as stated above) are authorised, unless under exceptional circumstances.

Children who are absent from school, exceeding the 10 days, will be taken off roll.

Under no circumstances will holiday requests be authorised should the proposed time period clash with public examinations such as SATs.

Exceptional Circumstance Request Forms are available from the school office. You should not expect the Headteacher to agree to a family holiday during term-time. Each request is considered by the Headteacher and the overall pattern of attendance and punctuality over the year is scrutinised. If it is shown that the child has a poor record then absences may be deemed unauthorised

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received from the parent/carer by showing the medical appointment card. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible. Where there are specific medical conditions requiring regular on-going hospital appointments and treatment, this will not impact on the pupils being able to attain 100% attendance rewards.

Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events.

Special Occasions

A request for a child to attend a special occasion during school time, e.g. family wedding, must be made in advance and the Headteacher will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision.

Days of Religious Observance

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence and 100% attendance rewards are not affected.

Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day

Exit from the school during school hours is only through the main entrance. The absence is recorded in a book with the reason, time and whether the child is returning to school. Children will not be allowed to leave during school hours unless accompanied by a responsible adult.

Parents

Parents will be promptly informed over any concerns regarding attendance and given the opportunity to discuss these matters with an appropriate member of staff.

Pupils

Pupils should be aware of the importance of sustaining their attendance at the highest possible level. This will be encouraged through positive strategies including our own incentive schemes.

School Staff

School staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.

Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff and should be treated as a priority by all. As a school we employ a range of strategies to encourage regular attendance and punctuality, liaising with parents.

Strategies

As a school we are committed to providing incentives to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Please note 100% attendance is required to receive the awards below i.e. if a child is not in school for their attendance mark, morning and afternoon, they will be marked absent. This includes medical appointments.

Weekly Class Attendance Winners are announced weekly during Celebration Assembly:

- **Attendance - Foundation Stage & KS1**
The attendance teddy bear, will be awarded to the class with the best attendance for the previous week
- **Class Attendance Cup- Key Stage 2**
The attendance cup, will be awarded to the class with the best attendance in KS2.
- Every week at celebration assembly a 'lottery attendance draw' and a prize/reward is given if the child has gain 100% attendance during the previous week
- Termly 100% attendance will receive a prize
- Every child who has gained 100% attendance from September to July will receive a special treat

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the *Governors* to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. 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 our 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.

We work with due regard to the equality act 2010 to make sure that all our pupils regardless of ethnicity, ability, home language and special educational needs are included and are able to access our sanctions procedure.

Next review – September 2018

Gill James

Signed.....(Headteacher)

Date... Dece 2017.....

Signed.....*Sonia Oxford*.....(Chair of Governors)

Date.....September 2017.....