



Attendance Policy

Policy:	Attendance policy
Approved by:	Governing Body
Date:	January 2025
Review cycle:	Annually

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2023-24	2023-24	M Parkin	Old Policy
2024	2024	Jennie Bailey	New policy written

RATIONALE

At St Mary's Church of England primary, we believe that every child is a precious gift from God where each child is special and unique. Children are at the heart of every decision we make here at St Mary's and it is our mission for all our children to love, learn and flourish.

At St Mary's C of E Primary School we believe that in order for children to reach their full potential and flourish as individuals they must benefit from the education we provide through regular school attendance. To this end the Academy will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Aims and expectations

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of his/her opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

Pupil Expectations

- That they attend school regularly, at least 97% of the time.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

Parental Expectations

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To make all non-emergency medical appointments outside of school hours.
- To provide medical evidence of appointments given by medical agencies, for example, hospital/orthodontic appointments, so that we can authorise the absence.
- To ensure that they contact the school promptly for each day of absence unless discussed with the appropriate member of staff for extended periods of absence. This can be done via letter, phone call, dojo message to the office or email office@stmarysedwinstowe.smat.org.uk
- Provide accurate and up to date contact details to the school.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects the pupils' performance in school.
- To provide medical evidence if requested

What can parents and pupils expect from school?

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance with appropriate coding.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their parent, unless there are concerns for the child in terms of their safety).
- We will reward good attendance but not discriminate against children with significant medical needs (where medical evidence has been provided).
- A high-quality education.
- Systems and support to address attendance concerns.
- Staff are appropriately trained in using our recording systems for attendance.

Encouraging Attendance

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- A high quality and engaging curriculum.
- Recording of good attendance on individual pupil reports.
- Weekly individual recognition of 100%*
- Termly class and house attendance award and recognition*
- Bronze, silver and Gold awards for 100% attendance for any one term, two terms and whole year; prizes for all those with 100% attendance for the whole year.*
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, class and pupil level attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the school.
- A relentless attitude to raising expectations from pupils and parents where attendance and achievement are concerned.

*Any attendance rewards will take into consideration pupils with significant medical needs that impacts attendance to avoid discrimination

Absence Procedures

When a pupil does not attend, the academy will respond in a number of ways depending on the individual circumstances.

- 1) Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on a day of absence via dojo to office, email or phone call to notify them of their child's absence and the reasons for this.
- 2) Parents are to contact school on each day of absence
- 3) Parents will be contacted by the office if a child is not in school and no reason has been given.
- 4) This will be followed up with a home visit to check on the welfare and safety of the child if we have not been able to make contact by 1pm that day.
- 5) If there has been no communication and a home visit is unsuccessful, we will follow necessary protocol to ensure that we can ascertain the safety of the child, this may result in referrals to other agencies such as social services.
- 6) Where a child has not been present for 9 sessions (4.5 days) a welfare check/home visit will take place.
- 7) Medical evidence may be requested where a child has not been present at school for an extended period of time or there is reason to believe that they are well enough to be in school.

Absence Monitoring

When attendance falls below the school's expectation of 97%, monitoring will be put in place. Phone calls will be made, along with letters home to outline these concerns and any actions that have been agreed.

Causing concern:

- Where attendance falls below 97% a children will be monitored closely. A letter will be sent to parents where children's attendance is declining and has the potential to be classed as persistent absentee.

Persistent Absence:

- Where a child's absence falls below 90% this is classed as persistent absence. School will arrange a targeted support meeting to discuss any barriers to attendance and put in place attendance improvement plans.

Severely Absent:

- Where a child's absence is more than 50% this is classed as severe absence. Regular targeted support meetings will take place to ensure attendance improves, this may include working with outside agencies.

Unauthorised attendance:

- Where there are more than 2 days (4 sessions) of unauthorised absence, school will contact parents/carers to inform them of this and discuss ways to ensure children attend school regularly.
- A referral for a penalty notice can be made for up to 10 sessions or more of unauthorised attendance over a 10 week rolling period.

Where attendance causes a concern and parents/carers are not working alongside school to engage with improving this, a referral to the local authority may be made, this may result in legal action being taken.

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teachers in our school have high expectations of the children's attendance.

They;

- Take a proactive role in pupil attendance and absence.
- Discuss the importance of good attendance with their class and take an active interest in attendance competitions and rewards.
- Discuss with pupils in cases of poor attendance, truancy or patterns that cause concern and to communicate this with the headteacher as appropriate.
- Keep class attendance monitoring accurate through the use of electronic registers, enquiring in cases of absence.
- Develop positive relationships with parents and make contact with home for both praise and concern.

The Role of the Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible will;

- Support the staff in the implementation of the policy
- Oversee the reporting of progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- Liaise with all stakeholders in the monitoring and tracking of attendance.
- Ensure positive attendance remains a priority within the school.

The Role of the Attendance Officer and School Office

- Liaise with staff regarding weekly attendance data and other reports on request.
- Liaise with class teachers regarding messages regarding messages received and individual parental contacts.
- Ensuring registers are checked to ensure they are completed daily and that codes are correctly inputted.
- Monitoring attendance including letters to parents and requesting penalty notices from the local authority where required.
- Support with attendance panels and initiatives to raise attendance.

The Role of Governors

- Ensure the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2024) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Lateness

As a school, we actively promote good punctuality. Pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation are challenged. Parents will be contacted in cases of persistent lateness.

- School gates open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am
- Registers remain open 30 minutes from the beginning of registration, for reporting purposes. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open between 8.45am and 9.15am he/she may be marked present.
- Where a pupil arrives between 9.00am and 9.15am, he/she will be marked with the letter L. (Late before registers close)

- Where a pupil arrives after register closure at 9.15am without good reason, he/she will be marked with the letter U or M if the late relates to a medical appointment. (U indicates unauthorised absence and is used when a pupil arrives after the register has been closed). In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10-week rolling period.

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Pupil Registration Regulations 2006. Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at the school. (Elective Home Education).
- Where the school has been notified by a Health Care Professional that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Headteacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Targeted Support Services to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Headteacher has been notified that the student has died.
- The pupil has had 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
- Where a pupil has failed to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

Categorising Absence

Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If there is not an acceptable explanation offered for absence then the matter must be referred to the Headteacher. The school therefore has the right to not authorise absence if they see fit.

- Reasons for absence will be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.
- All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised which can lead to fixed penalty notice, see below.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated
- Absence that the school deemed an exceptional circumstance

Unauthorised Absence

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10-week period.

Family Holidays

The school cannot authorise holidays unless under exceptional circumstances due to the adverse effect upon the child's education.

Unauthorised absences may be referred to the local authority, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of £160 per parent per child being enforced (under section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996), for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

The amount of a fixed penalty notice is set by the Department for Education and are therefore subject to change without amendment of the policy.

It is the parents' responsibility to complete a 'leave of absence request' for any intended holiday/leave of absence detailing any exceptional circumstances, a minimum of 20 school days prior to the holiday being taken.

Where school suspects a child may be on holiday and parents have not notified school, a home visit may be conducted.

Absences **will not** be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time unless under exceptional circumstances
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the Headteacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

Monitoring

The Headteacher monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. They also report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor attendance, and to ensure that the school policy is administered fairly and consistently.

Review

The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Appendix 1 – Attendance expectations



Did you know?

When children attend school they:

- Can achieve their potential
- Have better career prospects
- Learn how to look after themselves and be healthy
- Grow in confidence
- Keep up with work and homework
- Make new friends



Appendix 2 – Absence procedures

1

- Parents to notify office (Dojo, email or phone call) of absence stating reasons.

2

- Parents to contact school on each day of absence.

3

- Parents will be contacted by the office if a child is not in school and no reason has been given.

4

- If no contact is made by 1pm, a home visit will take place to check on the welfare and safety of the child.

5

- If no contact is made during home visit, external agency support will be initiated through social services and the police.

6

- Where a child has been absent for 9 sessions (4.5 sessions) - a welfare home visit will take place.

7

- Medical evidence may be requested where a child has not been present for an extended period of time or there is reason to believe that they are well enough to be in school.
- Routine medical appointments should not be made during school time.

Appendix 3 – Attendance monitoring procedures and actions

Weekly

Attendance officer will monitor the ongoing attendance of all children and ensure all codes are entered correctly. Rewards will be given during FAB assembly.



Half termly

1st instance of **attendance below 90%** - Letter 1 sent home inviting parents to a targeted support meeting along with child's attendance report. Children will be placed on attendance tracking and attendance watch. *(If this is in Autumn 1, this will be for information only)*



2nd instance of attendance below 90%

Parents/carers will be invited to a targeted support. Support will be agreed and may include a referral to additional services - Letter 2



Further instances of attendance below 90%

Parents/Carers will be sent further letters and meetings will be arranged. This may result in a **Notice to improve** indicating that legal action may be taken.

- A pupil may skip a stage for attendance if there is historical poor attendance to allow for early intervention.

Do I need to keep my child off school?

Chicken Pox Until all spots have crusted over	Conjunctivitis No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Diarrhoea & Vomiting 48 hours from last episode	Glandular Fever No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Hand, foot & mouth No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Impetigo Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Measles or German Measles 4 days from onset of rash	Mumps 5 days from onset of swelling	Scabies Until after first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after commencing antibiotics	Slapped Cheek No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Whooping Cough 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Flu Until recovered	Head Lice No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Threadworms No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Tonsillitis No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed		



Appendix 5 – Letters

Attendance concern letter 1 –Causing concern (declining towards 90%)

Address

Date

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define **good attendance to be at least 97%** over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. St Mary's C of E Primary school is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

We are aware that absences due to illness arise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. We are also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence is been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence.

We are obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently at ___% and therefore your child is at risk of being identified by the Department for Education as a potential persistent absentee. Their attendance will now be closely monitored.

If there is any further support or guidance that school can provide to you or your child to support regular attendance, please do not hesitate to ask your class teacher or arrange a meeting with Mrs Bailey.

Yours Faithfully,





Attendance concern letter 2 – not improving/90%

Address

Date

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define **good attendance to be at least 97%** over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. St Mary's C of E Primary School is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

We are aware that absences due to illness arise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. We are also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence is been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence.

We are obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently at ___% and therefore your child is identified by the Department for Education as a potential persistent absentee. We enclose a copy of your child's school attendance record for your information. Up to the age of 16, a yearly 90% attendance would mean a child losing over a year of school education and failing to achieve their full educational potential.

You are invited to a targeted support meeting on _____ to discuss how we can work together to support your child in regularly attending school.

Yours Faithfully,





Attendance concern letter 3 – notice to improve

Address

Date

School Attendance Notice to Improve (Please read this letter carefully)

Dear

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school or fails to attend regularly the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996. If your child is a registered pupil at an alternative provision in the circumstances set out in section 444ZA of the Education Act 1996, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence.

You, _____ are a parent/carer of _____, (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at St Mary's C of E primary school. The school has offered support to you and your family to try and help improve _____'s attendance, including _____

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between _____ and _____ the pupil failed to attend regularly at St Mary's C of E Primary School, which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have twenty school days (4 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be issued / a referral may be made to the Local Authority requesting they issue you with a Penalty Notice. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days if this is the first offence.

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

More information regarding this notice can be found in the attached leaflet. If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact us as soon as possible:

Yours sincerely



Appendix 4 – Application for leave of absence

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME EVERY DAY COUNTS GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL= GOOD PROGRESS

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school during Term Time. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The school cannot authorise holidays unless under exceptional circumstances due to the adverse effect upon the child's education.
- Unauthorised absences may be referred to the local authority, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of £160 per parent per child being enforced (under section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996), for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.
- A referral for a penalty notice can be made for up to 10 sessions or more of unauthorised attendance over a 10 week rolling period.
- Absence for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
 - availability of cheap holidays
 - availability of desired accommodation
 - poor weather experienced in the school holiday period
 - overlap with beginning or end of term
 - holidays booked before checking with the school
 - day trips

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school at least 20 school days prior to the proposed holiday.



APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name Class

Home Address
.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School _____

Date of Return to School _____

Total number of school days missed _____

Please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have a holiday in term time?

Do you expect to be taking any more term time holidays this academic year?

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application _____

Signed _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 20 SCHOOL DAYS NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE (4 weeks). Please do not book your holiday until you know that the school will authorise your child's absence.

School will not be held liable for any costs incurred.