

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's CE VA Primary School aims to serve the families of Tetbury by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote Christian values through the experience we offer all our pupils. Our vision is of a caring, loving community where we light a spark of curiosity, build on individual talents and give people the courage to be the best they can be.

St Mary's Primary School is committed to maximising the achievement of all our pupils. There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement. We aim to promote regular attendance and good punctuality in order to ensure all our pupils achieve their full potential. The school's ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

Improving attendance is a school priority. The school has set itself a target for attendance to be above the nationally expected 95% and for the number of pupils deemed to be PA (Persistently Absent) – pupils with attendance below 85% - to be reduced. The school works towards all pupils attending school for at least 95% of sessions.

POLICY AIMS

- To maximise the attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all.
- To monitor, communicate with and support children and families where attendance is a cause for concern.
- To work in partnership with parents to resolve any attendance issues.
- To analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work with the educational entitlement and Inclusion Team, Social Care and Health Care to improve attendance.

STRATEGIES

At St Mary's:

- Attendance is a priority
- Good attendance is celebrated, rewarded and promoted at every available opportunity.
- Attendance targets are set for the school year.
- Parents/Carers are informed of the school's attendance.
- Attendance data is analysed and informs future planning.
- Governors are regularly kept informed of attendance figures.
- Support and intervention is provided where poor attendance continues.

- Pupils are provided with a secure, happy and stimulating environment where they are valued and welcomed so that they feel their presence in school is important.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed, equipped and ready to learn as stated in the school's Home – School Agreement.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available support or help can be provided.
- Let the school office know by telephone before 9.00am on **each** day of absence from school and explain why their child is absent and when they expect them to return to school.
- Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not illness.
- Understand that there is no entitlement for parents to take pupils on holiday during term time and that holidays in term time are not an automatic right.
- Notify the school in writing if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

Governors will:

- Monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Set targets for attendance annually
- Report on the attendance data on the school website.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that everyone at school sees attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Oversee attendance procedures with the school's attendance officer.

The school administrator will:

- Record the names of all absent pupils before 9.30am daily.
- Call the parents/carers of any child who is absent from school on the first day of absence if a satisfactory reason has not already been given and record the reason reinforcing the school's attendance policy if necessary.
- Provide the headteacher with information to enable them to evaluate the success of the school's policy and make fair decisions about attendance.
- Update SIMS regularly with attendance information.
- Update SPTO with attendance information at the end of every term.
- Record any child who arrives after 9.05am as late.

- Record any child who arrives after 9.15am as absent for the morning session.
- Record children arriving late or leaving early on a daily basis
- Monitor lateness and where the register shows 4 separate late marks over a two week period inform the school's attendance officer and/or Pastoral and Inclusion Lead.
- Produce class weekly attendance figures for Friday celebration service.

The School's Attendance Officer will:

- Work in partnership with the families of Persistent Absentees and work towards improving attendance.
- Communicate with any families whose child's attendance drops below 95%, discussing the school's policy and ways in which the school can support the family in improving attendance.
- Write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about a child's attendance.
- Work with families whose children are persistently late for school.
- Communicate concerns about attendance issues to the Headteacher.
- Produce weekly attendance reports for the Headteacher including % overall attendance in the school year so far, overall school attendance for the week, class attendance for the year so far, a list of pupils whose attendance for the year so far is below 95%, a list of pupils whose attendance is below 85% for the year so far (PA).
- Produce attendance reports termly including overall attendance for that term, school attendance by class for the term and a list of pupils who have been awarded 100% attendance for the term. (6 term year).

Class Teachers will:

- Emphasise the importance of attendance for successful learning through praise and celebration of good attendance.
- Provide an accurate record of attendance by taking the class register promptly at 8.55am and marking any child as late who arrives between 9.05 and 9.15am.
- Respond promptly to any issues raised in the weekly analysis of attendance in collaboration with the school's attendance officer and the HT if appropriate.
- Log any discussions with parents concerning attendance.
- Organise for work to be sent home for any child who is expected to be away for a prolonged period through sickness.
- Report attendance % to parents at parents meetings and through written reports.

School Times:

We expect children to be on the school playground ready to line up by 8.45am. Children come into school at 8.50am and the register is taken at 8.55 and register closes at 9.05am.

Children who arrive after 9am must report to the school office so that their attendance can be recorded. Pupils arriving after 9.15am will officially be recorded as absent for the morning session. This will be given as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason can be given such as a medical appointment.

The school will phone parents/carers before 9.30am if a reason for absence is not given.

ILLNESS

Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school on each day of absence by 9am to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Is when a pupil:

- Is absent with prior permission from the school
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dentist appointment,
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance.
- Has suffered a family bereavement.
- Has been excluded.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Is when a pupil:

- Is when a pupil is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is given.
- Arrives after 9.15am and no acceptable reason is given.
- Is away from school on a holiday for a period not authorised by the headteacher.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a child is on an educational /school visit, is attending an approved off site activity or is receiving special offsite tuition.

If a pupil has 10 unauthorised absences in a ten week period, a referral will be made to the LA for a Fixed Term penalty Notice.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to time off during term time and the school can issue a fixed penalty notice if an absence is recorded as an unauthorised holiday. (Fixed Penalty Notice Leaflet). An authorised leave of absence during the term time is entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and not a parental right. Not being able to afford a family holiday during holiday time is not an exceptional circumstance. The headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away if the leave is granted.

Exceptional circumstance may include:

- The need for a family to spend time together after a family crisis
- Holidays with parents who are service personnel.

If parents/carers wish to apply for permission from the Headteacher, a holiday form should be completed well in advance of the holiday dates. The Headteacher will consider the request carefully and will look at the child's attendance data, the pupil's age and stage of education before notifying the parents whether she is able to authorise the absence or not.

Where a pupil has had more than 5 days (10 sessions) of continuous unauthorised holiday, a written warning of this will usually be issued, in the first instance, by the school. If there is any further unauthorised absence within 15 school days or further unauthorised absence within the 12 month period a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Local authority of £60 per parent per child.

APPOINTMENTS

If it is really necessary to arrange appointments during school hours, school should be pre-notified. If pupils are leaving school during the school day for an appointment then the school office should be told when the child leaves the premises and when they return. If present during registration then no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent during registration then the register should be marked with an authorised absence. Parents should note that if a child is present at registration they will not be marked as absent for that session.

FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, the school will consult with the medical service. Where necessary a referral will be made so that the school can make an evaluation of the child's educational and health needs.

LONGER ABSENCES

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back to the school and will be helped to catch up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period of time by the inclusion workers and teachers to ensure that the pupil settles smoothly back into school life.

REWARDS

- 100% attendance for each term to be celebrated in assembly with a certificate and each child's name to be on display.
- Weekly attendance is celebrated every week in Celebration Service.
- Pupils with attendance above 95% at the end of the year are to be celebrated.

WHEN ATTENDANCE CAUSES CONCERN

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher who will if necessary contact parents/carers to try and resolve any issues. Attendance Improvement Meetings will be arranged with parents where targets will be set that will be monitored over a four week period. If the targets are not met a referral will be made to the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team. If there are a high

number of absences due to 'illness' the school may need to stop authorising them if no medical evidence can be provided. If matters are not promptly resolved then a referral will be made to the Education Entitlement and inclusion Team.

Agreed School Interventions:

- Below 95% - First letter to be sent to the family from the Attendance Officer.
- At 90% - Discussed with SLT and second letter to be sent if appropriate. Warning Letters issued if appropriate. Individual Attendance Plan to be put in place if appropriate with the family. Attendance monitored weekly on a rolling record.
- At 85% - If appropriate the school to involve the help of the Education and Entitlement Inclusion Team. Attendance monitored daily.

LATENESS TO SCHOOL

At 5 lates in one term – The family will be contacted by the school.

At 10 lates in a 10 week period – discussed with SLT and, if appropriate a letter to be sent to the family Attendance monitored weekly.

FURTHER LEGAL ACTION

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Maintained Schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60 after a warning has been issued by the school.

Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

Attendance Target: 2013: 95%

Attendance Target 2014: 97%

This Policy will be reviewed annually.