

# Attendance Policy

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## AIMS

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. **At St Mary's Primary School we expect pupils to attend school every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.** We believe that term time is for school and 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.

Our attendance policy aims to:

- To promote good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- 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 analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work with the Local Authority, Social Care, Health Care and other outside agencies to improve attendance.

## LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

By law schools are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.55 and will be kept open until 09.05. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.15 for Reception and KS1 and 13.30 for Key Stage 2.

Children who arrive after 8.50am must report to the school office. 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.

## **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

### **Authorised Absence**

Is when a pupil:

- Is absent with prior permission from the school
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a non-routine 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.

## Absences for medical reasons

Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 9am to provide the reason for the absence and on each subsequent day of absence. If a child is absent due to sickness and diarrhoea, the school will assume that the pupil will be absent for the required period of 48 hours since the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea so no further phone call is required.

Absence due to illness or other medical conditions will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or condition. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## 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.

## Requests for a leave of absence during term time

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include the funeral of a grandparent, parent or sibling, sudden loss of housing (up to a maximum of three days) and weddings of parents and siblings. 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 will determine the number of school days a child can be away if the leave is granted.

If parents/carers wish to apply for permission from the Headteacher for a **holiday**, a request for a leave of absence form should be completed at least two weeks before the holiday dates. The vast majority of requests for holidays during term time will be refused and, if the holiday is taken anyway, this will constitute as an unauthorised absence. Where a pupil has had more than 5 days (10 sessions) of continuous unauthorised absence for the purposes of a holiday each parent will be

referred to the Local Authority who may decide to issue each parent with a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of school. Parents may be issued with a penalty notice without warning which could result in a fine of £60 per parent per child. Further information on the issuing of penalty notices is set out in the Penalty Notices Leaflet – Information for parents and carers available on the school website or from the school office.

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The practice in Gloucestershire is for all penalty notices to be issued by the Local Authority.

Penalty notices may be issued by the LA under any of the following circumstances:

- An excluded pupil is found in a public place, without justifiable reason for being there during school hours on a school day during the first five days of an exclusion.
- A minimum of ten sessions of unauthorised absence from school during term time in order to take a holiday within the immediately preceding ten week period.
- Persistent lateness of a pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed and where there have been ten sessions of unauthorised lateness within the immediately preceding ten week period.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 per child within 21 days or £120 per child within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### **Appointments**

If it is 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.

### **LATENESS**

Where a child is recorded as having 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness over a ten week period, the school will explore the reasons why and consider whether any support or reasonable adjustment may be required from the school to the pupil. The school will issue a letter to the parent(s) warning that if there is further unauthorised lateness within the next 15 school days then a penalty notice will be requested. The warning letter will be sent by first class post and formally addressed to each parent. The warning letter should be considered as served and the fifteen day period as starting, two days after being posted to allow for delivery time. If there is not further unauthorised lateness within the 15 day period no penalty notice will be issued but if there is a further ten sessions of absence within the next twelve month period following the warning letter, a penalty notice may be requested.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

At St Mary's:

- Attendance is a priority
- Good attendance is celebrated, rewarded and promoted at every available opportunity
- Attendance data is analysed and informs future planning.
- Governors are regularly kept informed of attendance figures.
- School systems identify and address emergent patterns of irregular attendance at an early stage.
- 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.

Rewards:

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

## **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

The Pastoral and Inclusion Lead monitors pupil absence on a regular basis.

If a pupils' absence goes below 95% contact will be made with the family to discuss concerns and offer support.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Pastoral and Inclusion Lead and/or Headteacher who will if necessary contact parents/carers to try and resolve any issues.

If a pupils' absence continues to rise following this then Attendance Improvement Meetings may be arranged with parents and the Gloucestershire good practice guidance will be followed. Copies of this are available from the school office.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DFE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Parents will receive information about their child's attendance data in the pupils' end of year annual report and at parents' evenings from the class teacher. Parents can always request this information from the Headteacher or Pastoral and Inclusion Lead.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly (**every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given**) 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 the first 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 will not be authorised unless circumstances are deemed to be exceptional by the Headteacher.
- 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.
- Challenge the Headteacher and key staff on improving the attendance of pupils.
- Support the Headteacher and key staff in improving the attendance of all pupils.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that everyone at school sees attendance as a priority.
- Ensure the school's attendance policy is regularly reviewed and adhered to.
- 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 staff and governors.

The school office staff 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 the school's data tracking system (Insight) with attendance information at the end of every term.
- Record any child who arrives after 9.05am as late. (L)

- Record any child who arrives after 9.15am as absent for the morning session. (U)
- 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 Pastoral and Inclusion Lead.
- Produce class weekly attendance figures for Friday celebration service.

The Pastoral and Inclusion Lead 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.
- Have regular meetings with the Headteacher to discuss attendance concerns.
- 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 about 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.

### **MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, Pastoral and Inclusion Lead and Attendance Governor. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing body.

### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy is linked with our child protection and safeguarding policy.



**REQUEST FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil Name..... Class: .....

Pupil's address: .....

.....

Date of first day of absence..... Date of return to school.....

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school.....

*If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.*

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

***I understand that is the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.***

Name of parent/carer (s) making the application:

Dr/Mr.Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

Signed..... Date .....

Dr/Mr.Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address.....

.....



Signed..... Date .....

Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised.

For school to complete and copy retained:

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED (please circle)

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**REQUEST FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME – SCHOOL RESPONSE**

*This response must be sent to each parent and a copy retained*

Dear.....,

Child's Name:..... Class.....

Your request for absence on the following dates: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

totalling ..... Days, has been considered and is

AUTHORISED

UNAUTHORISED

Attendance is currently ..... %

The request **does/does not** meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Please note: An unauthorised absence will be notified to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Signed: ..... Headteacher

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Print name: