

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. **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.

POLICY AIMS

- To promote good attendance and reduce 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.

STRATEGIES

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.

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.

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 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.

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 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 diarrhea, the school will assume that the pupil will be absent for the required period of 48 hours since the last episode of sickness or diarrhea 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.

HOLIDAYS IN 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, a request for authorised 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 which may result in a penalty notice to each parent of each absent child.

Where a pupil has had 5 days (10 sessions) or more of continuous unauthorised absence for the purposes of a holiday each parent may be issued 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 of the school website or from the school office.

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.

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 attendance is celebrated every week in Celebration Service.
- Pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the year are to be celebrated.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

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.

WHEN ATTENDANCE CAUSES CONCERN

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 goes below 95% contact will be made with the family to discuss concerns and offer support.

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. PARAGRAPH ABOUT COLLECTING DATA

LATENESS TO SCHOOL

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.



This Policy will be reviewed annually.

ATTENDANCE ISSUES

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE		
ATTENDANCE AT OR ABOVE 95%	➔	See rewards
ATTENDANCE FALLS BELOW 95%	➔	Letter from Senior Staff Informal meeting with PAIL and family to support family in improving attendance.
ATTENDANCE FALLS BELOW 90%	➔	Discussed with SLT Second Letter Attendance Improvement Meeting and Monitoring of Weekly Attendance
NO IMPROVEMENT IN ATTENDANCE	➔	School to refer to LA to discuss legal action.
LATENESS		
5 LATES IN ONE TERM	➔	Family contacted by the school.
10 LATES (after registers have closed) IN A 10 WEEK PERIOD	➔	Discussed at SLT Penalty Notice request issued to the LA Monitor Attendance
NO IMPROVEMENT IN PUNCTUALITY	➔	Involvement of LA and Fixed Penalty Notice.
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
5 DAYS (10 SESSIONS) OR MORE OF CONTINUOUS UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE. EG. HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME	➔	Warning Letter sent from the school
FURTHER UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE WITHIN 15 DAYS OR FURTHER UNAUTHORISED OVER A 12 MONTH PERIOD	➔	Fixed Penalty Notice Issued by the LA (£60 per parent per child).