



ST MARY'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

DATE APPROVED BY SMNG	20 June 2017		
REVIEW DATE Annual	Summer 2018		
SIGNED HEAD TEACHER	<i>Jane Mutch</i>	DATE	20/6/17
SIGNED CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	<i>James</i>	DATE	20/6/17

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

This policy reflects the DfE regulations introduced in September 2013.

Our attendance target is 96%, in line with Ofsted and the London Borough of Ealing expectations

We want to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education to maximise the opportunities for everybody to realise their potential. Experience and research demonstrates a clear link between good attainment and good attendance. The school believes that setting a clear policy for attendance and punctuality is an excellent preparation for later school years and future employment.

St Mary's School strives to be welcoming and caring, so that everybody in the school community feels welcome and secure.

The school has a system of incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who do not. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY SUMMARY FOR PARENTS

1. Punctuality:

Children need to be ready to register at 9am and must be collected promptly at 3pm (or by 6pm from after school club).

If the primary parent/carer is not collecting their child at the end of the day, the school must be informed in writing or by telephone in an emergency. A pupil cannot be dropped off or collected by anyone below the age of 12 and parents must provide a letter of authorisation, accepting responsibility for the safety of their child, if the person collecting them is between the ages of 12 and 14.

2. Attendance:

Full attendance is expected during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances do not include holidays, long weekends, leaving for holidays one day before the end of term or visits to family or friends. Parents must understand this when they place their child in the school. Exceptional absences should be requested, using the appropriate form, in writing in advance from the Headteacher.

3. Unauthorised absences:

Unauthorised absences are treated seriously by the school. Initially we try to resolve any such absences by contacting parents directly, but if there are persistent problems of either punctuality or attendance, the local authority will be informed during our scheduled visits from the Educational Welfare Team. Although it is very much a last resort, ultimately, fines can be imposed on parents, and pupils may lose their place at the school. Each pupil's punctuality and attendance record will be passed on to any school they propose to attend after they leave St Mary's School.

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The DfE advise that "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances"

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, teachers and Trustees
- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives

Leave should not be taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances, when authority should be requested from the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to a request being agreed. Where unauthorised absence is taken, the school will take relevant action. For example, the parents or carers of pupils, who are repeatedly absent without authorisation, will receive a letter from the school to invite them to discuss any issues contributing to absence with the Headteacher. We will aim to work together to return the pupil to full attendance.

Parents and carers are asked to adhere to this policy in the signing of the home school agreement. Unauthorised absences not only damage their own child's education, but also that of others. This is because teachers need to help those children who have been absent catch up with the work they have missed. This reduces the time available to give to the remaining children in the class.

This policy also seeks to encourage punctuality. Children can arrive at school from 8.55am, with the register taken at 9.00 am. Children, arriving after the register has closed (9.10am), are recorded as an unauthorised late and this is documented in their end of year progress report. If a child is repeatedly late, the Head Teacher will arrange to meet the parents.

This same applies to punctual collection of children after school. The school day ends at 3.00 pm (unless the child is staying for an after school club). Where parents continually fail to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the school day, the school may consider making a referral to Social Care.

Any child remaining in school after 3.10pm, will be taken to after school care as the school staff have commitments after school. The after school care provider will then bill parents accordingly.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

St Mary's School recognises the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We acknowledge that parents have a vital role to play, and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, not least because these are very helpful when there is a problem about attendance.

Measures we take include:

- Holding induction sessions for all new parents and pupils
- 100% attendance is celebrated at end of each half term and at the end of year assemblies.
- The attendance and punctuality cups are awarded weekly to the class with the best record that week.
- Term dates are published at least two terms in advance on the website. Any changes in the term dates will be notified at least one month in advance and communicated in a letter to the parent of every child.
- Punctuality and attendance is reported to Trustees termly.

Telling the children about the importance of attendance and punctuality

Children receive guidance from teachers about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Children are encouraged to walk and cycle to school and to get to school with time for the 9am registration.

What Parents Can Do To Help

The school works with parents and carers to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises that parents have a crucial role. If a pupil is unable to attend school, parents/carers should inform the school of their child's absence and provide an explanation by 9.15am on the first day of absence. The nature of the explanation determines whether the school will authorise the absence or not.

Parents are expected to adhere to the procedure for authorised school leave. All requests for school leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher and prior to the leave being arranged. Each case is treated individually and authorisation for absence may be granted in very exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

If the school is not notified of absence then the school will initiate contact with the parent on the first day of absence. The school will make contact by email if phone contact is not made. A record will be kept of the number of failed attempts to contact the family for safeguarding reasons and may be referred to Educational Welfare

If parents have any comments, concerns or complaints regarding the school attendance policy, these can be addressed in writing to the Headteacher or an appointment can be arranged for discussion with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher's Role

The Headteacher will consider every request for leave and may grant leave in exceptional circumstances. The parents will need to give the proposed dates of absence with a return date, and clear reasons for the absence. If the child fails to return on the agreed date, this

will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If the family cannot be contacted, there is a possibility that the child may then lose their school place.

The Headteacher responds to teachers' referrals and concerns by checking through the registers for problems with attendance and takes appropriate action. This information is shared with class teachers and termly with Trustees, so that strategies can be employed to improve attendance within each class year.

The Headteacher oversees the collection and reporting of attendance data and the publication of statistics and reports on attendance to parents, pupils and Trustees.

The Head Teacher will meet with parents whose children's attendance falls below 90%. If this persists, a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer will be made.

The Role of Teachers

Class teachers have the responsibility to keep an attendance register. This is a legal document and must be completed accurately. The attendance register must be completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are coded according to the information received from the parent of the child. The class teacher monitors the register daily and is sensitive to emerging patterns of absence and lateness.

The class teacher reports any concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality to the Headteacher.

The Role of the Office Staff

The office staff record late arrivals each day, receives telephone calls from parents/ carers whose children are absent and makes telephone phone calls to parents/carers if their child is not in school and the school has not been notified of the reason for absence.

Half-termly, termly, annual and individual pupil attendance reports are compiled on request from the Headteacher.

The Role of Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance.

Reports, statistics and initiatives to improve school attendance will be shared and consulted on with the Board of Trustees and documented in Trustees' meeting minutes.

The Role of the Education Welfare Service

The school has signed an agreement with Ealing to encourage maximal levels of attendance during the school year. The school's designated welfare officer will meet with the Headteacher half termly to discuss any attendance or punctuality concerns. The welfare officer will become involved where there are persistent or longstanding issues. The Education Welfare Service may, on the instruction of the school, issue penalty charges for repeated episodes of unauthorised absence or lateness.

What Happens After a Long Absence

The school is sympathetic to the needs and circumstances of pupils returning after significant periods of absence and will facilitate the smooth reintegration of pupils both academically and socially. In such circumstances the school works with parents, carers and

pupils in drawing up an individual reintegration plan which may include opportunities for counselling and feedback, peer support and mentoring and an agreed review period.

Punctuality at the beginning and end of the day

Children need to be ready to register at 9am and must be collected at 3pm. If the primary parent/carer is not collecting their child at the end of the day, the school must be informed in writing by email or note, or in emergencies by telephone. A “password” should be set.

Term dates

School term dates are published in advance and can be found on the school website. <http://stmarysschoolng.org/>

Staff training days (inset days) are included in the term dates schedule. Parents or carers will receive written notice of any changes in term dates.