



# Attendance Policy

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Approved by Governors on: 5.10.23

Signed by Chair *A Green*

Review Date: Jan 2025

## **Attendance Policy**

The content of this policy was produced by a working party of Oldham Headteachers to offer guidance and collaborative thinking around the implementation of attendance strategies and provide a consistent response from schools across the authority

### **Vision**

***“Love one another as Jesus loved us.” (John 13: 34-35)***

*Through God’s love and our Christian Values we encourage each individual to love, respect and value themselves and others. We encourage and nurture the growth of every individual and their uniqueness so that all flourish and become all that they can be and all that God made them to be.*

### **Statement of Intent**

St Mary’s CE Primary School believes that good attendance is essential for all our pupils if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. School education lays the vital foundations of a child’s life, ensuring they are ‘school ready, work ready, life ready.’

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

As a school we will support families to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Ultimately, it is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day. Our school expected level of attendance over a school year is 97%.

Education is a vital part of a child’s development and as such the child’s right to education should be protected. St Mary’s CE Primary School takes a strong line in this respect and relies on the support of parents to ensure that our attendance is as high as possible.

All pupils have a right to education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, parents/carers may be breaking the law.

If the school has concerns about a pupil being absent or does not accept the explanation for an absence as genuine, the Headteacher or School Administrator will raise the matter with the Education Attendance Service.

### **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;

- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

## **Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually, wearing their full school uniform and prepared for the school day, and ensure that their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:30am, or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (E.G.Dental/medical appointment)
- Try to make health appointments outside of school hours, and provide proof if the child's absence is due to an appointment with another agency (E.G Health)
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents before 10am requesting information if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested
- School may unauthorise an absence retrospectively if contradictory information is found and notify parents
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late. Where there is no improvement a letter will be sent from the Headteacher to parents or carers.
- When pupils' attendance falls below 92% school will inform parents or carers , by letter and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Liaise with the Education Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Attendance Officer
- not accept reasons for absence from pupils or siblings. Reasons for absence must be provided by a parent or carer.

## POSITIVE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Registers are completed accurately at the start of each day.
- Daily monitoring by class teachers – contact made with the school administrator to raise concerns where appropriate.
- Regular monitoring by the Headteacher and School Administrator on attendance and punctuality.
- Badges to pupils with 100% termly attendance records.
- Class attendance award each month and published on the school newsletter
- Half termly meetings involving Headteacher, School Administrator &/or Attendance Officer.
- Reviews and meetings with parents as required. A Governor may attend one of these meetings.

## Types of Absence

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised: The school approves pupil absence.
- Unauthorised: The school will *not* approve pupil absence.

The school is responsible for children's attendance and only the Headteacher can authorise absences.

## Example absence (authorised/unauthorised)

Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Genuine illness of the pupil</li><li>❖ Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil</li><li>❖ Major religious observances</li><li>❖ Visits to prospective new schools</li><li>❖ External exams or educational assessments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Holidays in term time</li><li>❖ Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park/weddings</li><li>❖ A birthday treat</li><li>❖ Oversleeping due to a late night</li><li>❖ Looking after other children/other family member</li><li>❖ Appointments for other family members</li></ul>

## Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- Punctuality to school is crucial, lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the main gates are open from 8.40am until 9.00am.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 9.00am and pupils who arrive after this time must enter via the School Office to ensure they are accurately recorded as on the premises.

- Children who arrive after registration will receive a late mark.
- Registers close at 9.30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Children who have been for a medical appointment and have given school prior notice of their appointment will receive a 'medical' registration mark as such.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm for Key Stage 2 and 1.30pm for Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil may lead to referral to the Education Attendance Officer and could result in a fixed penalty notice.

### **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to notify the school office if their child needs to leave the school during the school day.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person. (see Missing Child Policy)

### **Leave of Absence / Family Holidays During Term Time**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence (holidays) will NOT be authorised during term time. **All leave of absences must be reported in writing via the school office.**

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- In "exceptional circumstances" permission may be granted for a maximum of 10 sessions (equalling 5 days) of absence providing your child has a good (**95% or higher**) attendance record over **the previous three terms** and the Headteacher and the governors are satisfied that the request complies with the "exceptional circumstances" requirements.
- Exceptional circumstances are considered as one-off situations (once in a life time events). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised. Each application will be judged on its own merit.
- If leave (holiday or leave of absence) is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised 'leave' absence and the Education Attendance Officer will be notified.
- School staff are not be expected to provide additional work for the child during the leave period.
- The Governing Body of St Mary's CE Primary School has determined that NO holidays taken in term time will be authorised and in accordance with Oldham Local Authority guidance the school will refer for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised holidays of 10 or more sessions.

- The Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **Extended Leave of Absence**

Where a pupil is absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days the school must inform the Local Authority. Extended leave of absence must be requested and risks the child's school place being revoked and filled by another pupil. The school will take the following steps;

- Request sight of travel and or accommodation tickets.
- Agree a return date.
- Inform parents of loss of place after 20 day absence – pupils will be 'off rolled'.
- Parents are expected to contact school if any circumstances change.
- Parents should sign an agreement acknowledging the risk.

### **Children Missing in Education**

The school recognises that children missing education are at risk of underachieving and may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We follow the LA guidelines in monitoring such children. If a child is apparently "missing", we endeavour to find that child as soon as possible, working with partner agencies, including the Police and Social Care if necessary.

Our Attendance Officer works closely with families to support good attendance. Where there are serious concerns, we work closely with Education Welfare and other agencies to ensure that children are safely in school. Where a child goes missing, we make every attempt to contact the family by phone, letter and home visits. Children missing for more than 10 days MUST be referred to the LA (or earlier where there are existing safeguarding concerns), who will attempt to trace the family. Children who do not attend for more than 20 days without notification are removed from the register.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence including if there are persistent punctuality issues or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child. For example, if two children are taken out by two parents for a week's holiday during term time then the initial fine will be £240, rising to £480 after 21 days.

### **Monitoring and Review Arrangements**

The Governing Body has the responsibility of setting down the guidelines and principles with regard to school attendance policy and procedure and ensuring compliance with School Attendance Regulations.

The Governing Body through the Headteacher will monitor and evaluate school attendance levels and review the effectiveness of this policy.

## Data Protection (GDPR) – Managing and Storing Information

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All documents stored are in accordance with legal requirements where appropriate, and guidance from the Records Management Toolkit for Schools.

- a) All individual attendance records are kept confidentially and securely in SIMs and CPoms
- b) Any correspondence is attached to the pupils file.
- c) If a pupil transfers from the school the attendance records files will be sent to the next school as part of the transfer documents.
- d) All attendance registers for pupils will be retained until they leave the school and then securely disposed (documents must be shredded)
- e) All absence letters and penalty notices will be retained for their current year plus 2 years and then securely disposed (documents must be shredded)

**This policy:**

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
		✓