

## **Attendance Policy**



**St Mary's C E Primary Academy**

adopted this policy on  
September 2019

Introduction:

## **School Belief**

At St Mary's C.E. Primary Academy, we strongly believe in nurturing passionate, life-long learners to unlock their potential, within a caring, Christian family.

We will achieve this belief by;

- Developing the whole child, academically and emotionally
- Enabling every member of the St Mary's family to be the best that they can be
- Nurturing Christian values
- Sharing a passion and optimism within the school community
- Developing and teaching a stimulating curriculum
- Supporting families and the community in being aspirational and optimistic for all

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our school newsletter;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;

**Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing even if you have phoned the office or told your child's class teacher.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Absences that are justified then turn out to be a holiday

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for reasons only they know. If this affects your child, please make an appointment to see your child's class teacher so that you can work out what the problem is before it escalates.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

St Mary's C.E. Primary Academy has deemed regular and positive attendance to be 95% or above.

A child will be deemed to be a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for any reason.

A child will be deemed to be heading towards 'persistent absenteeism' if their attendance is between 94.99% and 90%.

If a child misses 10% of their education every year, this will amalgamate into them missing a whole year of education between Reception and Year 9 before they have even taken their GCSEs. A whole academic year will put them at a severe disadvantage.

Persistent absenteeism can be a sign of problems or neglect within a household which often leads to low academic and social outcomes as the child is not at school to learn. This means that we have a duty of care to work together when we identify low attendance.

If your child's attendance is between 94.99% and 90% you will be informed of this and set an attendance target and their attendance will be monitored. If there is no improvement or your child's attendance drops below 90% you will be invited into an attendance meeting to discuss any issues contributing to the low attendance, a parental agreement for your child's attendance will be written and closely monitored. All PA cases below 90% will be made known to Educational Entitlement Services. We would like to resolve the concerns with for example, if the reason is because of illness then we will work together to support you in improving your child's health.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
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#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If we continue to not hear from you we will send letters to request information, informing you of the level of absence for your child and invite you to attend a meeting to discuss their attendance.
- Refer the matter to Education Entitlement Service if attendance falls below 90%.

### **The Family Support Worker:**

Successful attendance is a product of parents and school working together but if difficulties cannot be resolved and attendance drops below 90% then the school will refer your child to our family support worker and the Local Authority if there is no improvement. The person leading this referral will be the Family Support Worker. This referral is because other ways of trying to improve your child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist. As a result, there may be a need to impose sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

### **Lateness:**

If your child misses the start of the day they will miss work and time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, the office and can be embarrassing for the child.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in their line walking in at that time. Gates will be locked at **9.00am**.

Registers are marked by **9.00am**. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. If this occurs more than twice in a week, you will be invited in to a meeting with your child's class teacher to discuss any problems that there may be regarding getting to school on time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence unless the reason for them being late is acceptable such as medical appointments or an event out of your control.

### **Absence and Holidays In Term Time:**

All absences need to be requested using the school request form.

Any form of holiday in term time will not be authorised.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

St Mary's C.E. Primary Academy, in line with the Local Authority will assess each request for absence individually taking into account the regular attendance of your child as well as their academic success at school. If your child's attendance is not regular or above 95%, this may mean that you could face a Penalty Notice if you go on an unauthorised term time holiday for more than 5 days when

Any holiday requests within the first two weeks of the school academic year will automatically be unauthorised as this is an incredibly important time of the year, establishing routines, expectations, forming social groups and helping the teacher to form an academic picture of your child.