

St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School



Attendance Policy

Policy reviewed and approved by Premises, Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Safeguarding Committee - Autumn Term 2014

Policy reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Body on 2nd December 2014.

Date of review – Autumn Term 2015

Reviewed – October 2015

Next review – Autumn - 2016

Good attendance at school is important for your child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is unlikely, but it is essential that the school is informed of the reasons for absence. Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy and all absence figures have to be reported to the LA and the DfES and are recorded on a child's annual report. It is also important that your child arrives on time for school, as the start of the day establishes the learning activities for the day. Lateness is recorded in the register.

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance.

For your information the Local Authority Parents Leaflet has been included as part of our policy to ensure that parents have clarity on the penalties incurred for non attendance.

Education Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children go to school regularly. The local authority can now issue Penalty Notices if a parent fails to make sure that their children receive the education they deserve. This leaflet tells you about these notices.

School Attendance and the Law

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending every day will your child have the best chance to get the most from their education.

The Headteacher at your child's school must decide whether to authorise an absence. That is to agree that there was a legitimate reason for your child not to be in school.

There are only five legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of the child
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment
- To attend an important family event / celebration

The Targeted Services Division can take legal action against you if you fail to make sure that your children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court

This information is about Penalty Notices and how the EWS will issue them.

What they are

Penalty Notices are fines, issued by the Targeted Services Division, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

How they will be issued

Notices will be issued by post. They will not be issued during a Truancy Sweep or as part of a meeting with parents.



This graph shows the effect of missing time from school over a year. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind.

The Education Welfare Service will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving.

Instead they'll monitor the case and support the pupil. If attendance doesn't improve, or if absences begin to increase the EWS will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

Further information

If you have concerns about your child's education you should, initially, discuss these with school.

If you would like further information about Penalty Notices, please contact the District Team Manager, of the Local Support Team, telephone number:- 01782 296290.

Arrival and registration

All children should be in their classrooms at 8.55 am each day although children are entitled to enter the school from 8.45am to ensure a calm start to the day.

Early morning activities are set ready for children when they enter the classroom, usually spelling practise and mental maths activities. The register is taken twice a day: at 9am and at 1pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.

If a child arrives after the register has been taken he/she will be marked in as **Late**. After 9.25am this will become an **Unauthorised Absence**. It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the school by completing the signing in/out book in the entrance hall, this is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

Legitimate reasons for absence

Illness and medical appointments:

Every effort should be made to arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence. Please see our Pupil Illness policy for further guidance on the recommended period of absence due to sickness.

Religious observance:

If you are planning to take your child out of school for religious observance we ask that you inform the school at least a week prior to religious holiday.

Family bereavement:

The school will work closely with, and be sympathetic to the needs of the family.

Leave of absence:

Leave of absence is a planned leave from school authorised by the Headteacher. Which is granted for attending family events e.g weddings and other family special events.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. With effect from 1st September, amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority Legal Team have advised that the following instances may be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' when requests for holidays in term-time are received:

1. It is of significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
2. A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday
3. There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation
4. The holiday is a unique, never to be repeated, occasion which can only take place at the time requested
5. Parents professions prevents holidays at a recognised period e.g. Emergency Services holiday restrictions and shift restrictions.

6. Leave can only be taken during the requested time due to serious medical/physical needs determined by external factors (respite/treatment plans)

The headteacher will determine if the leave of absence request meets any of the criteria outlined above and the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Process for requesting holiday absence:

If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is being requested, each application will be judged on its own merit. Parents will need to write to the Headteacher, outlining the date of the proposed leave of absence and detailing why the application is being made. When applying parents should also state if there are siblings attending one of our partner schools so that the Headteachers from both schools are able to make a joint decision for each family.

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in court action and fine. The Local Authority may also decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and / or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken in term-time:

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Shopping trips, birthday trips and holidays at home will not be authorised.

Keeping parents informed

As from September 2012 the school will send out an end of term record of attendance so parents can be kept fully aware of attendance percentages.

A colour-coded system supports the attendance information to further illustrate the impact on absence.

Rewarding Good Attendance

At the end of the Summer Term pupils will be awarded a certificate for high attendance.

Appendix

Colour bands – attendance

Signed: _____
Jane Hughes – Headteacher

Dated: _____

Signed: _____
Stephen Bayfield – Chair of Governors

Dated: _____

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Appendix A - Attendance Colour Codes

98% - 100%

WELL DONE THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than 2 weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

95% - 97%

GOOD

If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the whole year

90% - 94%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

If you are in the grey group you could be missing at least 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Less than 90%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year.