



St Mary's and St Peter's C of E School

Attendance Policy 2021

We believe high standards of care and love are an integral part in the quality of teaching and learning across the whole curriculum. Our school Christian vision of 'Life in all its fullness' applies to all areas of our school. The two great commandments given by Jesus will underwrite the life of our school; they are to 'love God' and to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. It is our aim for both of these instructions to be evident in the whole life of the school, in the relationships between all members of the community; pupils, staff and parents, and also in our safeguarding responsibilities.

St Mary's and St. Peter's school fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and staff. Our Attendance Policy is one of a range of documents which set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the school. We wish to create a safe, welcoming and vigilant environment for children and staff where they feel valued and are respected.

Introduction and Purpose

This is a successful school and every pupil plays their part in making this so. We aim for an environment which enables, encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to the academic and social development that will improve the life chances of children and young people.

Parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to get the most benefit from the opportunities.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Children and young people who do not attend school regularly are at risk from a whole range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes in terms of their educational achievement and future employment and financial security and citizenship and could potentially be an indicator of a Safeguarding issue.

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

Promoting Regular attendance

Creating a learning environment where all pupils can achieve is everyone's responsibility. Establishing positive patterns of regular attendance is vital and everyone has a responsibility to help. This includes parents, children and all members of staff.

What we will do

- At parent meetings inform you regularly on your child's attendance, punctuality and how this relates to their academic progress;
- Reward good or improving attendance where appropriate;

Understanding types of absence

- Every half – day absence from school has to be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. **Only the school** can make this decision and record it.
- This is why information about the cause of any absence **is always** required, in writing.
- **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. However, we would always ask that appointments are made outside school hours whenever possible.
- **UNAUTHORISED** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave" of absence has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and /or legal proceedings. Some examples of this include:
 - Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily
 - Day trips and holidays in term time – including half days or collecting early before the end of a half term / term
 - Absences that have not been properly explained
 - Late arrival **after** the close of registration (morning 9.15am or afternoon 15minutes after the start of the afternoon session)
 - Shopping trips, looking after other children/adults or birthdays

Ill Health Absence and Attendance at Medical/Dental Appointments

We do realise that there are occasions when a child may be too ill to attend school or may need to attend a medical/dental appointment. However, we believe that if the following guidance is followed, the absence and impact this could have on a child's learning will be reduced.

- Parent(s)/Carers should book routine/non-urgent dentist or GP appointments after school or in the holidays
- If your child is referred to a hospital specialist or similar and the appointment must be during school hours, please request a late afternoon appointment which would only affect the last lesson of the day
- Parent(s)/Carers should ensure that when your child attends a medical or dental appointment they are only absent for the duration of the appointment and not absent for the whole day
- Providing proof of appointments is vital in establishing where a pupil has been when absent from the school premises. The school is responsible for the Safeguarding of all pupils on their school roll.

Therefore

- The school will not authorise medical or dental appointments unless they are provided with a doctor's/dentist's letter (a copy is acceptable) or an appointment slip or card clearly stating the appointment date and time.
- When a pupil needs to leave school for a medical or dental appointment, the parent/carer or child must show a letter/appointment slip/card to the Office when they sign out or when they sign in after attending the appointment or the absence will not be authorised. GP surgeries can issue appointment slips.
- When a pupil arrives late to school after a medical or dental appointment, a parent/carer or child must show their letter/appointment slip/card to the Office when they sign in late after attending the appointment otherwise the absence will not be authorized.
- If a child is absent for 20 sessions or more (10 days) for illness, medical or dental appointments, irrespective of whether these absences are authorised or unauthorised, the school may consult the Education Welfare Service for advice and you could be invited to school for a joint meeting to address absences relating to illness and medical and to discuss persistent absence, attendance and how this will be affecting the child's attainment.
- Any request for leave in association with either medical intervention or educational examinations here or overseas will need to be made in writing to the Head teacher and will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a pupil is

absent from school due to the above circumstances and the absence is unauthorised, the school may refer your child to the Education Welfare Service.

- If you have any concerns about the child's health and you are concerned that this may affect their attendance, please contact the Education Welfare Service for support and advice on 020 8891 7969

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and unauthorised.
- Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents to tackle this.
- We will monitor all absence thoroughly
- If your child's attendance has reached or is in danger of reaching the PA level we will inform you immediately and make the case a priority.
- Pupils who have reached the PA level will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we will combine this with academic mentoring where absence is seen to affect progress and attainment.
- All PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an Action plan to help monitor and improve attendance.
- All PA pupils will be made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the **first day** of absence;
- Telephone on each day of absence;
- If your child is absent due to sickness or diarrhoea they will need to stay at home until at least 48 hours after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea to prevent spreading any infection to others.

If your child is absent we will;

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance falls below 90%.

Lateness

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of every day they miss work and the opportunity of hearing vital information / news and sharing class time with their friends.
- Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. Your child may also be embarrassed by arriving late and may fall into absenteeism in order to avoid the ordeal.

Our attendance procedure

- The school opens at **8.45am**, the register is taken at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by the time the register is taken.
- At **9.15 am** the registers will be closed.
- In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after **9.15 am** they will receive a late mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and means that they will have an **unauthorised absence**.
- If the problem persists this may mean that you could face the possibility of a penalty notice.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school.
- You may also wish to seek advice from the Education Welfare Officer.

Absences in term time

- Parents/Carers should not arrange their family holiday to be taken during term-time as all absences will now be marked as unauthorised by the school due to an amendment in legislation by the Department of Education.
- If leave of absence is granted by the school and is deemed as “exceptional circumstances” the school will monitor the absence to ensure the pupil returns to school by the agreed date.
- Leave of absence will only be authorised for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

ABSENCE FOR PERFORMING

- Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher will authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. The school will be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as we are satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education

The Education Welfare Service

Parents are expected and encouraged to contact the school at an early stage and work together with school staff in resolving problems together. This approach is nearly always successful.

If this does not resolve the problem, the school will refer your child to the **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)** from the local authority. They are independent of the school and can provide impartial advice.

The EWO will work together with you and the school in order to resolve the difficulty and return your child to regular attendance.

School targets, projects and initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in helping us to meet these targets and to aim higher in all aspects of their education.

Targets for the whole school and for the classes are displayed in the school and we hope you will take the opportunity to study them.

The **minimum level of attendance** for this school is **97%**. Many children have 100% attendance; they never miss a day's school. This is what our school is aiming at. On average if your child is absent more than a day and a half over six weeks (95% attendance) your attendance is too low.

Our aim is to achieve better than 97% attendance because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as to the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

The Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Helen Swain – Headteacher

Allison Peach- School Business Manager

Policy Date: March 2021

Review Date: March 2025