



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'

ST MARY'S INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance, Punctuality and fining Policy

Policy Review:

This Policy will be reviewed by the staff & Governing Body every 2 years.

Reviewed	September 2019
Next Review	September 2021

St Mary's Infant School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At St Mary's Infant School, we want the whole school community - governors, staff, parents, carers and children to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps the children to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Statutory Framework

Under section 700 of the Education Act 1996, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where she/he is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations that the policy makes of them.

The expectations for school include:

- St Mary's Infant School will provide a safe learning environment
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality

The expectations for parents/carers include:

- Parents/carers are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- Parents will inform the school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents will ensure that the school is informed of any changes to contact details

The expectations for pupils include:

- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn
- Pupils will be taught the importance of regular and punctual attendance

Doors Open

- The classroom doors open at 8.50 am and all children need to be in class by 9.00am
- School finishes at 3.10pm

Registration

- Registers are called at 9.00am and 1.10pm. Registers close at 9.10am and 1.20pm and are marked consistently by staff. Any pupil arriving after closure will be marked absent for the whole of the session
- A session is defined as half a day. So, if a pupil arrives after closure this will count as a session lost. Where the same child is registered before the closure of the pm register at 1.10pm, then this would not be counted as a session lost.

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after 9.00am should report to the school office. The external gates giving access to the playground will be closed.
- Parents/carers should sign the Late Arrivals book
- Staff will transfer late arrivals to the registers
- Staff will be made aware of any late arrivals by office staff

Following up Lateness

- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of staff who will work with parents to bring about an improvement in punctuality
- Persistent lateness will also be brought to the attention of the Attendance Improvement Officer

Authorising Absence

- School can authorise absence for a number of reasons. These include:
- Sickness
- Medical/dental appointments
- Approved educational activities
- Religious observations
- Family bereavement
- Interviews at another school- for example at transfer
- Educational activities such as residential trips.

Holidays

Holidays will not be authorised by the school, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as terminal illness in the family. Requests for such circumstances will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis.

In cases of absence due to serious and prolonged illness, school will discuss with parents on an individual basis about possible phased return to school. School can plan with parents to provide education at home for pupils who are likely to be absent for a number of weeks due to health issues. School will contact the Educational Support for Medical Absences team (ESTMA) to see if home tutoring can be arranged.

Monitoring

Attendance and lateness are monitored internally each term. Letters are sent to parents where lateness and/or absences are unsatisfactory. We will offer to meet with parents and offer them support- for example, referral to the school nursing team or our family worker. We will monitor the outcome of this offer of support and any agreed actions. If this situation continues and the agreed actions and support do not result in improved attendance/ punctuality, the Headteacher will escalate the situation by contacting parents by letter/ phone call or email to log our concerns more formally. Parents are invited to discuss the situation.

School will discuss the absences/ lateness with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO.)

Persistent Absenteeism

If absenteeism/ lateness continues, in agreement with the AIO, school will refer the child/ family to them. The AIO will request an 'Early Intervention Meeting' between the AIO and the parents to agree actions on how the situation can be improved.

Following the guidance of our Local Education Authority, school can request evidence of absences due to sickness, such as doctor's appointment cards, to be able to authorise these absences. If all of the offers of support are not fruitful, school may issue a Penalty Notice, in line with the Herts. County Council guidelines. School will consider if the child's needs are being met and if the child is being neglected, as a result of non-attendance at school, school will report this to Children's Services.

Penalty Notice

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their child, aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends regularly. Taking unauthorised term time holidays is grounds for issuing a penalty notice. We use penalty notices as part of our whole school approach to improving attendance. Penalty notices may be issued once a pupil has 15 or more sessions (a session is a half day) of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous school term. The absences may have occurred in a block or a series of odd days and/or unauthorised holiday.

The amount of the penalty is:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice
- £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice

If the fine is not paid, this will result in the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) taking the family to court for non-attendance.

Further information can be obtained from:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-schoolattendance>

Holidays

Absences due to holidays are most likely to be un-authorised except in exceptional circumstances, and then this is only at the head teacher's discretion. If a child misses 15 sessions during an academic year due to holidays, then we will report this to the Local Authority and it will be monitored.

Part- time timetables

Rarely, it may be suggested that a child has a part-time timetable for a short time. This is where the hours a child spends at school each day are reduced for a period of time and work is set for the child to complete while they are at home. This is always done in conjunction with an outside agency such as the Education Support Centre and a Pastoral Support Plan will be in place. School will report this to the Local Authority and our Governing Body for their records. This should only be a last resort and short-term intervention and school will work to increase the time the child is in school.

Children who are "missing from education"/ start to be home educated

If children who are on roll with our school cannot be contacted, for example if we believe that the family has moved away without informing us, the children are said to be missing from education and we will notify our Attendance Officer (AIO) of this and seek advice. If parent(s) notify our Headteacher in writing that they intend to home educate their child, we will pass this information onto the Local Authority within 5 working days before taking them off roll

If a child is missing at registration and we have not received confirmation from the parents of their absence then the child is missing in education. The attendance officer the local authority will be informed at the closing of registers.

Leaving and returning to school during the school day

- When pupils leave or return to the school during the school day, office staff must be notified
- Parents need to sign their child out and sign them back in if they return to school that day
- In event of a fire the office staff will check the late arrivals/early leavers books

Publication of Information

- The Attendance policy is available to parents/carers on the school's website with hard copies available from the office.
- St Mary's Infant School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents/carers and staff
- The school works closely with the Attendance Improvement Officer to monitor attendance and punctuality
- The headteacher reports regularly to Governors on attendance and punctuality
- The headteacher ensures that the termly attendance data is provided to the DfE.

School initiatives - Rewards and treats were discussed at School Council

- 100% attendance stickers given out at the end of each week.
- A high profile is given to attendance in the Friday achievement assembly.
- A cup is given out weekly to the class with the highest % of attendance. The %s are displayed in the hall.
- Weekly class attendance %s are displayed in each classroom window.
- Class attendance figures shown on newsletter.
- The class with the highest attendance % for each half-term has a treat on the last day. What this is, is discussed in class.
- Attendance certificates are given out each half-term, gold, silver and bronze.
- Each half-term a raffle is held to win a prize (a book). Any child with 100% attendance is included in the draw.
- 100% attendance awards given out to relevant children at the end of the year.
- Promote aspirational thinking - in class activities to link school attendance with aspirational thinking- what do you want to get better at? What do you want to be when you grow up?



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'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'

2019/20

Dear

Our records show that since the beginning of this academic year 's attendance now stands at%. This level of attendance is significantly below the school's minimum target attendance of 96%.

Ongoing poor attendance, persistent lateness and taking holidays during term time are factors often linked to low levels of academic success. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

Whilst we appreciate that children have illnesses that prevent them coming to school, regular attendance is vital if they are to make progress. Children often feel unsettled both in terms of their learning and in their friendships when they have had time out of school. Unless children are sick or are clearly too unwell to come to school, we recommend they come in. If children are just feeling off colour, they sometime perk up when they get into school; if they deteriorate, we will always phone home to get them collected.

You will be aware that schools are not allowed to authorise any absence in term time, unless it is for illness or for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Please see the attached warning letter from ISL as part of Herts County Council. Currently this term, hassessions of unauthorised attendance from school. Should this exceed 15 sessions this term, a Fixed Penalty fine will be issued.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Miss V. Edey,

Headteacher