

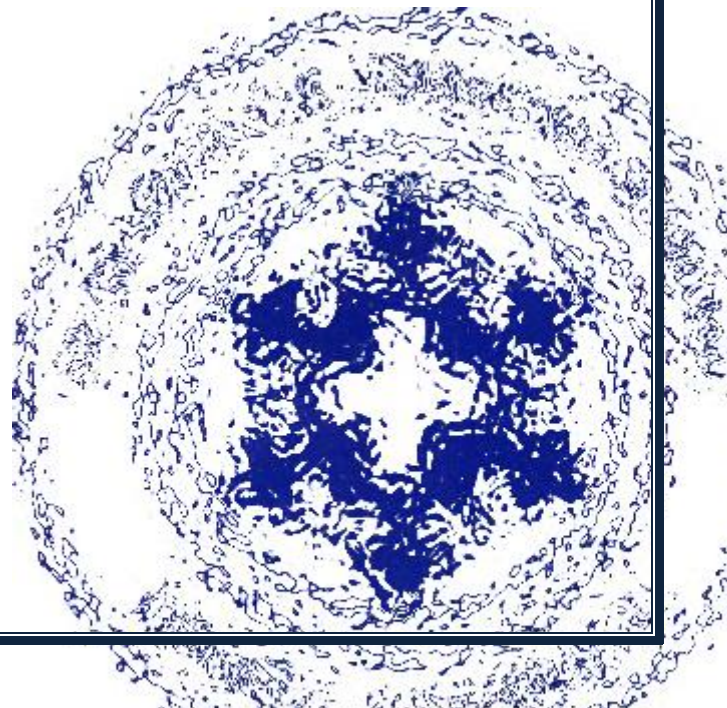
St. Mary's

Church of England Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019-21

Approved : Oct 2019

Reviewed : Oct 2021



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is going to be late, parents are required to notify the school by 9.00am on the same day – by phone call or when established, the message facility on the school website, and followed up with an explanatory writing on the child's return.

Pupils

Pupils will be made aware of the importance of maintaining their attendance at the highest possible level.

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually, and to adhere to the school's policies on behaviour and dress.

All pupils' attendance will be monitored using individual attendance records.

Governors

Attendance will be an agenda item at the first Governors' meeting after the completion of the previous term. The Headteacher will report to the governing body at this meeting highlighting progress against the school's action plan. The Chair of Governors monitors all correspondence to the Headteacher regarding absence.

An attendance summary will be developed for the year and action plan put in place if required.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.

Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff), who will respond to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care.

A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

All unaccounted absences will be promptly investigated, and parents and pupils will be kept informed about any attendance concerns.

Pupils and/or parents who experience difficulties with regular attendance will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the class teacher.

Senior members of staff and/or external support services such as the Education Welfare Service can also offer support should the need arise.

Attendance issues will be given the highest profile through Parent's Evenings, Governors/PTA, AGM, School prospectus, Newsletters, letter prior to commencing school etc.

Whenever a child is absent, class teachers will work with parents to ensure pupils catch up on missed work to ensure the absence does not affect the child's progress.

REGISTRATION

Registers will be taken punctually each morning and afternoon lessons at 1:00pm.

If a child arrives after registration has closed, a late mark will be entered into the register by the class teacher.

When a pupil misses registration altogether and there has been no advance notification from the parent/carer then that pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for that session.

Authorised absence

Absence will be authorised for:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments, but wherever possible these should be made outside of school hours
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised for:

- Any holidays in term time
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other family members
- Domestic chores
- Birthdays or similar events
- Any work (paid or unpaid) undertaken during school hours

Approved education activity

Pupils will not be deemed absent when out of school to take part in:

- Sporting activity
- Educational visits
- Work experience
- Courses/classes in other establishments
- Study leave

FOLLOWING UP LATENESS AND ABSENCE

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact school by 9.00am on the first day of all absences, and where possible to give a return date. Where this is not possible the parent/carer should keep in regular contact with the school.

If a pupil is absent regularly, or apparently unnecessarily, the school will contact parents/carers to notify them of the school's concern and to emphasise the parent/carer's legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance.

If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the SLRP Education Welfare Service.

Pupils who are absent through sickness, or any other unavoidable cause, for an extended period will be supported in continuing their education at home where this is possible, and will be supported in re-integrating back into school on their return.

PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

We take a proactive approach to attendance which rewards good attendance. This is achieved through attendance certificates and through other rewards.

Within the confines of the National Curriculum, pupils will be offered a varied, flexible and rewarding education matched to their individual needs. They will not be able to take full advantage of this unless they attend regularly.

Attendance data will be collected and analysed regularly, and combined with an annual review of the school attendance policy will inform future practice and school targets which will be set out in an action plan to be shared with parents and carers.

Consultation between the school and SLRP Education Welfare Service will be arranged to support and set targets for poor attenders in partnership with parents, and other external services will be made know to parents where appropriate.

Regular liaison between feed primary schools and secondary schools will identify pupils who may require extra support during the transition into Year 7.

ACTION PLANNING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Whole school and individual pupil attendance will be kept under regular review and a senior member of staff and school governor have an overall responsibility for school attendance.

To maintain our good attendance record, St Marys CE Primary School will:

- Accurately mark registers with the appropriate code letters for absences using Scholarpack, when established. This will give a detailed analysis of the nature of absence as well as the quantity.
- Compare this information to local and national benchmarks and targets, as well as the previous performance of the school, and combined with the school policy, will be formally reviewed with Governors at least once per school year.
- Emphasise regular attendance in the school newsletter.
- Promote attendance through regular rewards for high attendance.
- Request written permission for children to be absent during term time.
- Have first day contact with parents of children who are absent due to illness.
- Have close liaison with the SLRP Education Welfare Service regarding pupils who have particular attendance problems.
- Child's attendance during the school year will be shown on their end of term report.

The School Target for attendance is 97% for 2019-20.

Holidays in School Term Time:

The school acknowledges that from time to time some parents will want to take their children out of school for holidays. **Schools are now required to refuse requests for holiday absence in term time.** We advise that wherever possible, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on a child's educational progress, and can create difficulties for them on their return to school, particularly if they are joining a new school or class. It is important to note that only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school. Parents/Guardians cannot authorise the absence themselves.

An unauthorised absence from school is any absence that is deemed not to be an acceptable reason for missing school. Unauthorised absences from school carry the risk of prosecution under section 444 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. Headteachers may grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If you believe that your circumstances are exceptional, you must discuss the matter with the Headteacher. In considering a request, the Headteacher will take into account the child's age, the time of year of the absence, and the nature of the visit. He/she will also consider the child's stage of education and progress and the child's overall attendance record.

Headteachers will not authorise absence unless they believe your circumstances are exceptional. Case law identifies that any holiday or event which can be arranged during school holiday periods should not be authorised during the school term. On occasions, requests may be received for an extended period of absence. It is expected that these occasions should be very exceptional and that the necessity for, and the timing and length of such absence will require careful consideration by the school, families and pupils. Examples of very exceptional circumstances could include

- A trip to visit extended family living abroad
- The nature of the trip justifies allowing longer than two weeks in term time

A standard letter will be issued if an absence is unauthorised.



Absence Requests

Dear Parents and Carers

School attendance regulations changed from 1st September 2013 under **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** which amends the existing 2006 regulations. As a result of the new government legislation Headteachers across the country will no longer be able to allow any absence for the purpose of a holiday during term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised. All of the schools in the local area have agreed to a joint decision on this also. There has to be exceptional circumstances to approve an absence. I have listed the criteria below.

Allowed absence

- ✓ Sickness/illness
- ✓ Emergency and planned medical appointments (Parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours)
- ✓ Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment
- ✓ Day/s for specific religious observance
- ✓ School is closed due to unforeseen circumstances

Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the headteacher)

- ✓ Family bereavement or close friend bereavement
- ✓ Other compassionate grounds
- ✓ Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on school day–not travelling to a wedding unless it is abroad.
- ✓ Family crisis
- ✓ Examinations off site
- ✓ Educational Opportunity – Sport & Performance
- ✓ Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation
- ✓ Family re-location visit

Absences not allowed under any circumstances

- ✓ Family holiday no matter what length
- ✓ Family trips
- ✓ Leaving school early to travel to an event

I appreciate any sense of frustration you may feel as a result of the Government's changes but as you will see, the Government are very clear with both parents and Headteachers about this issue.

Yours sincerely

Brian Jones
Head Teacher