



St Mary's CE Primary School

N8 7QN

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Our Vision

As we love, we flourish

As we flourish, we aspire

As we aspire, we achieve

Together, we are a family.

Friendship, Compassion, Hope, Wisdom, Community,
Endurance.

October 2021

Through our daily school life at Mary's Church of England Primary School we encourage our children to build respectful friendships and demonstrate compassion towards others. Through this we build a strong community spirit, as together we are a family. Our teaching and learning provides the children with the wisdom and endurance they need to expand their minds socially, morally and academically so allowing them to achieve and flourish and fulfil 'Life in all its Fullness.' (John 10:10). We encourage our children to demonstrate and develop a dignity in their work and themselves which enables them to hope to aspire to be the best they can possibly be.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. We will also support parents in promoting and supporting punctuality by having their children attend lessons on time.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Children, Families and Community Committee of the governing body will monitor pupil attendance and will review this policy every two years.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance team (comprising of the school office staff and the School Home Support Practitioner)

The school attendance team will:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We use an online attendance register on our Management Information System (MIS). All pupils are on this register. Back up paper versions are available.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Pupils must arrive in school at the correct time for their phase on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the day and will be kept open for 10 minutes. Any pupils not present will be marked as absent.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Notification will be via a dedicated answerphone line, via email to either office or by calling in person.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We ask parents/carers to provide proof of appointment which is kept in the pupil's permanent record.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See Section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Children arriving late will have to sign in via the Inentry system in the reception of each school **
- Children arriving 20 minutes after the start of the day will be mark as absent for the session

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by first day calling or by sending a text message to the parent
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers are given attendance and punctuality information for their child in their end-of-year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's (or deputy headteacher as appropriate) discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

- The Attendance Team regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. They identify patterns and trends in pupil absence and punctuality, including persistent absence, and screen for pupils who fall below our target for attendance.
- Pupils whose attendance is less than 95% receive formal letters home and the parent/carer are spoken to informally and offered support where appropriate.
- Where attendance does not improve, the parent/carer is invited for a formal attendance review with the Inclusion Manager and a member of the Attendance Team. Attendance targets will be discussed and set for the child and further support and communications strategies will be put in place as necessary.
- Failure to improve rates of attendance will result in a formal meeting with the Headteacher and then a Governor.
- The school may then refer a family to the Local Authority Education Welfare Office with a possible recommendation that they receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).
- Outcomes of monitoring are fed into and cross referenced with Safeguarding and Child Protection monitoring, Pupil Progress Reviews, parent consultations and general monitoring.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Celebration Assembly – Every Friday, the school holds a celebration assembly and awards are issued to classes with excellent attendance and punctuality which develops healthy competition between classes and year groups to improve attendance.
- School Newsletter – this regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives which the school is using to promote attendance and punctuality.
- The School Learning Environment - A welcoming, organised learning environment which supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.
- All staff in school act as role models to the children and should have excellent attendance and punctuality themselves.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Team at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and poor attendance is closely monitored, tackled by the Attendance Team.

- A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).
- If a pupil's absence goes above more than an expected number of days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.
- If the Attendance Team are not able to reach the parent/carer they will contact all the emergency contacts on the child's record and will make a home visit (in pairs) if they are not able to speak to the family. They will leave a note requesting contact and if no contact is made then a referral will be made to EWO regarding Child Missing in Education.
- If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.
- Attendance data is collected via a variety of reports on our MIS and is used to identify patterns and trends either at an individual pupil level or groups of children. This allows us to identify those children who may need intervention and support
- Weekly attendance reports are provided to the headteacher by the Attendance Team.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The Children, Families and Community Committee of the governing body will monitor pupil attendance and will review this policy every two years.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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