



St Mary's C of E Academy

School Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

2022/23

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
 - The Aims of this Policy

- 2.0 Drivers – Local and National**

- 3.0 Roles and Responsibilities**
 - Lead School Governor
 - Parent Role
 - Head Teacher
 - Class Teachers

- 4.0 Communication**
 - Home School Agreement
 - Safeguarding

- 5.0 Our School Attendance Management Process**
 - Daily
 - Half Term
 - End of Term

- 6.0 Types of Absence**
 - Arriving at school late
 - Unauthorised Absence
 - Authorised Absence
 - Emergencies/ Leave of Absence
 - Religious Observance
 - Persistent Absence

- 7.0 Rewards and Sanctions**
 - Rewards
 - Sanctions
 - Penalty Notices and Birmingham Code of Practice

- 8.0 Quality Assurance**

1.0 Introduction

St Mary's school is committed to protect the rights of all children to education as stipulated in article 28 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Our school Attendance and Punctuality Policy is designed to give clear information in respect of our Attendance Management processes to parents, children, school staff, governors and the wider community.

This policy sets out our ambition for our children and recognises that there is a strong correlation between any absence and underachievement. It also recognises that good punctuality is essential for a child to start the school day prepared for learning.

We have developed the policy with our children, parent's staff and Governors and it is line with statutory guidance and expectations of Birmingham Children's Services. The Policy provides information about rewards and sanctions.

We will focus on reducing persistent absence, unauthorised absence and we will challenge unsatisfactory reasons given for all absences.

Our school will be a welcoming learning environment and our teaching staff are dedicated to help the children achieve the best they can.

In order to achieve the best outcomes for children it is expected that all our children will attend school every day on time. We believe that excellent attendance is paramount to raising standards and is fundamental to whole school improvement.

We expect our Governors, staff, parents and children to adhere to the framework of this policy.

1.1 The Aims of this Policy

- Improve Overall Attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and Governors
- To define agreed roles and responsibilities in carrying out specific tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to families
- To develop a systematic approach for reporting the school's absence information
- To utilise a system of Reward & Sanction
- To promote multi-agency partnerships to address the needs of children with complexities related to irregular attendance
- To bring in line policies and procedures to reflect the diverse needs of the wider community

2.0 Drivers – Local and National

Raising standards for children and young people are driven by legislation, national policy and the local agenda. Education establishments are subject to expectation, regulation and inspection to ensure standards continue to rise. Schools are constantly challenged to maintain standards and improve attainment. Our school will follow the principles and expectations as set out in the following documents.

- OFSTED Framework for inspecting absence 2011 & 2012
- Keeping Pupil Registers June 2008
- Persistent Absence DfE letter July 2011
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Lead School Governor

The Lead Governor for School Attendance will liaise with the school attendance officer.

The Lead Governor for Attendance will be satisfied there is contact between the school and home in respect of all absences and that the elements and aims of the policy are being followed. There is a Governor for Attendance for 2022/23 is.....

3.2 Parent Role

Parents must contact the school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for the absence. Parents should understand that in law, it is the school who decides whether the absence is going to be authorised or not. Schools will base this judgement on the reason provided for the absence and/or the level of absence.

Parents are encouraged to ensure their child attends school regularly and any emerging issues should be advised to the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents must NOT expect any leave of absence to be granted for the purpose of a holiday.

Parents must NOT expect any leave of absence to be granted automatically. This includes any requests for leave of absence in respect of a pilgrimage. Whilst all requests will be considered individually, parents must respect that the head teacher's decision, in collaboration with the Birmingham Local Authority is final and is made in line with Legislative constraints, National Government and Local Authority expectations.

Parents must contact school on day of absence. Our school doors open at 8.45am to the children and registers are marked at 8.55am.

Parents must make sure their child/ren arrive at school on time. It is the parents legal responsibility.

3.3 Head Teacher

The Head teacher must ensure the absence management process is in line with legislation and regulation. She must also ensure registers are maintained accurately in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006.

The Head Teacher will continue to raise education standards for children by encouraging regular school attendance & punctuality.

3.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers will ensure their registers are maintained in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) England regulations 2006. Class Teachers will ensure any information appertaining to a child's punctuality or attendance is communicated to the Attendance Clerk at the earliest opportunity. This will avoid unnecessary telephone contact with families or cause them undue concern.

Class Teachers will report any emerging patterns of absence to the Head Teacher.

3.5 School office staff

The school office staff will ensure registers are updated with the appropriate attendance and absence codes. They will also provide absence reports from the Education Management System (SIMS) at the request of the Head Teacher. They will liaise with Class Teachers and the Head Teacher or Attendance Lead to report any emerging patterns of absence or when a child is absent without a good reason.

4.0 Communication

We will communicate any changes or updated information to families and the community in the following ways. We welcome feedback from our families and Governors.

- Newsletter
- Website
- Annual reports
- Meetings
- Letters
- Telephone (to address individual matters when needed).

4.1 Safeguarding -“Children with a safeguarding vulnerability”

“Children with a safeguarding vulnerability” are closely monitored throughout the academic year. All vulnerable children’s names are held by our designated safeguarding Lead. If there is any change in attendance and punctuality then concerns are raised with parents first most and Social Worker informed if there is one assigned.

5.0 Our School Attendance Management Process

5.1 Daily

- All class registers will be marked accurately
- Reasons for absence will be screened to establish whether absence is authorised or not
- All daily absence will be scrutinised for reason and notification
- Parents will be contacted when the reason for absence is not satisfactory or unknown
- Parents will be advised if the absence is to be recorded as unauthorised
- Pupils arriving late will be recorded as such in the register
- All absences will be scrutinised for identification of repeat periods of absence or emerging patterns of absence
- Referrals to Education Welfare Service identified
- Requests for leave of absence referred to head teacher and Governors and parents informed of outcome

5.2 Half Term

- Letters sent to children on trajectory to become Persistent Absentees
- Identification of children who need multi-agency involvement to support concerns or complexities which include absence or punctuality concerns
- Implementation of multi-agency involvement to support concerns or complexities of individual cases where there are absence or punctuality concerns

5.3 End of Term

- Termly report from attendance consultant

6 .0 Types of Absence

6.1 Arriving at school late

- The times of our school day are 8.55am – 3.30pm.
- School doors are open for children at 8.45am to come straight into school.
- Registration closes at 9.30am
- If a child arrives at school late, then he or she will be recorded as **LATE** using the L code.

6.2 Unauthorised Absence (UA)

All absence will have an appropriate code in accordance with DfE Guidance Absence and Attendance Codes. If there has been no reason provided for the absence or an unsatisfactory reason has been provided, then the school can only record absence as UNAUTHORISED. It is the decision of the school and NOT the parent which determines whether absence is authorised or not.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence could be:

- Family Birthday
- Holidays not agreed Class attendance display with photos for children with 95% & over attendance. This is updated every ½ term.
- Weekly attendance & punctuality displayed on each classroom door.
- Half-termly reward decided by children and class teacher for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Half-termly reward decided by children and class teacher for the class with the best punctuality for KS1 & KS2
- Termly cinema sessions for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Termly cinema sessions for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Termly 100% attendance with no more than 3 lates given a certificate and a cinema afternoon
- End of year certificate and gift vouchers for 100% attendees with no more than 9 lates

-
- Shopping
- Hair cuts
- Buying shoes or uniform
- Emerging patterns of any absence until satisfactory reason has been sought
- Illness of another family member
- Illness & bereavement of grandparents and extended family members
- Trips to airports

6.3 Authorised Absence (AA)

Absence can be recorded as authorised when a school has been satisfied there is a satisfactory reason for the absence. It is only recorded as authorised if it is something affecting the child's ability to attend school.

6.4 Emergencies/ Leave of Absence

Parents need to apply for leave of absence **in writing to the Head Teacher in advance**, outlining the following:

- First date and last date of leave of absence
- Name, address and date of birth of the Child
- Full names and date of birth of parents
- Names of siblings at other Birmingham Schools
- Reasons for such a request
- Request to see both outward bound & incoming flight details (if appropriate)

6.5 In Law, it is the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise absence or not and this has been upheld by the high court. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the Head Teacher agree to absence which is in relation to holiday absence. To ensure fairness to families and to maintain a consistent approach across local schools there may be some occasions when the Head Teacher consults with Governors to determine whether the circumstances of the request are recognised as exceptional.

Exceptional circumstances refer to extenuating and emergency situations related to core family members. Core family members are Mother, Father, siblings of the child in school.

6.6 There is no automatic right for any term time absence. The Child's education will be paramount, and absence will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances. The school and governing body are committed to raising standards and therefore the educational needs of the child will be critical in the decision-making process. Parents should not expect term time absence to be granted.

6.7 The law states that schools can delete a pupils name from the register when the pupils has been continually absent for not less than 20 days, such absence was not authorised, and the proprietor (school) does not have grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause, and the proprietor and the LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is.

6.8 Religious Observance – The Department for Education (DfE) set out the definition for absence for Religious Observance. This being, "Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advanced notice."

The DfE explains that if the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave of absence.

Any additional days linked to a day set aside for religious observance will not be authorised by the school.

This means that the school will only be able to authorise absence for the **one day** set aside for any religious observance.

6.9 Persistent Absence (PA)

Any absence either authorised or not will impact on Persistent Absence. The school will identify pupils who are 'at risk' of becoming PA each term and will report to the Head Teacher at the end of each term the names of our children who are at risk. The school will then track these children through the year to ensure the risk of them becoming PA at the end of half term 5 is reduced. PA is measured throughout the year and the threshold for measuring PA is the number of children who are absent for 10% of the year or more.

6.10. The Attendance officer will report all cases of PA pupils to the Head Teacher. PA pupils or those at risk of becoming PA will be referred to other interventions such as Early Help.

6.11 Each half term each child with PA at 10% absence will be tracked, measured and reported as follows

Half Term 1	Half Term 1+2	Half Term 1+2+3	Half Terms 1+2+3+4	Half Terms 1+2+3+4+5	Half Terms 1+2+3+4+5+6
Pupils with 7+ sessions of absence	14+ sessions of absence	20+ sessions of absence	25+ sessions of absence	31+ sessions of absence	38+ sessions of absence

7.0 Rewards and Sanctions

7.1 Our school has in place the following to reward excellent attendance

- Certificates for excellent attendance
- Certificates for improved attendance
- Weekly whole class award in celebration assembly
- An attendance trophy is given to the class with the best attendance for the week
- A punctuality trophy is given to the class with the best punctuality for the week
- Class attendance display with photos for children with 95% & over attendance. This is updated every ½ term.
- Weekly attendance & punctuality displayed on each classroom door.
- Half-termly reward decided by children and class teacher for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Half-termly reward decided by children and class teacher for the class with the best punctuality for KS1 & KS2
- Termly cinema sessions for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Termly cinema sessions for the class with the best attendance for KS1 & KS2
- Termly 100% attendance with no more than 3 lates given a certificate and a cinema afternoon
- End of year certificate and gift vouchers for 100% attendees with no more than 9 lates

7.2 Sanctions

The following sanctions will be applied in respect of irregular attendance when other informal interventions have not worked eg. Phone calls, letters, informal meetings and Early Help offer. After this FAST-track to Attendance will be followed. This involves:

- Formal School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM)
- School Attendance Review (SARM) meeting

- Action Plan drawn up
- Formal warning notice
- Parent contract signed
- If there are 10 further absences (5days) then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) with all the relevant paperwork to follow up penalty notice/court action.

Prosecution for Irregular Attendance – Section 444, (1) Education Act 1996

On conviction of a section 444 (1) offence each parent of each child may be fined up to £2,500.

Prosecution for Irregular Attendance – Section 444, (1) (A) Education Act 1996

To secure a conviction for this offence, the prosecutor needs to show that the parent had knowledge of the child's absence.

On conviction, each parent can be fined up to £2,500 and or imprisoned for up to 6 months. If they fail to attend court a warrant for their arrest may be issued. A pre sentence report is required. The sentence can be suspended for up to 2 years.

Conditional Discharge

This is a means of disposal by way of a fixed term period up to 3 years. If the defendant is convicted within the period they could be re-sentenced for the offence.

7.3 Penalty Notices

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 adds two new sections (444A and 444B), after section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduce Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444 and enable a parent to discharge potential liability for conviction and for that offence by paying a penalty.

Section 3 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives powers to Local Authorities, head teachers or other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent is capable but unwilling to secure school attendance. These powers came into force on 27th February 2004.

Under existing legislation, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent commits an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absence is not authorised by the school.

The Penalty is £60.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 day period then the Local Authority must prosecute or withdraw the notice. Prosecution will be in respect of statutory action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All Parents and Carers will be liable for a Penalty Notice. This means where a parent/carer has made the decision to take children out of school for the purpose of a holiday the absence will not be authorised by the school and will be liable.

8 Quality Assurance

We will maintain a high standard for recording and reporting absence. We will support children and families to achieve positive outcomes by engaging with school staff and other supporting services and agencies. We will report to Governors about the following

- Number of pupils on trajectory to becoming PA
- Overall Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Progress to Absence Target
- Our attendance monitoring process through the School SEF
- Align our processes to the Ofsted Framework for managing school attendance
- Number of vulnerable children accessing other service or agency involvement

Review date July 2023.....

