

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due for Review: Every Year
Reviewed by: Resources Committee
Last Reviewed: November 2017
Next Review: November 2018

Mission: Living, loving and learning with God

1. PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's Primary School is committed to providing a successful and enriching educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any circumstances that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and therefore our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

2. OBJECTIVES

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

3. STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.

4. PRINCIPLES

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work with parents to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community in the development and review of our whole school attendance policy. We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We

will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process.

Parents and pupils will be informed of their attendance rates and related issues. We will promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence and will ensure regular evaluation of the Attendance Policy and procedures by Senior Leaders and the school governors (annually).

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Start and Finishing Times of Registration

Morning Registration: 8:445am – 9.00am

Afternoon Registration: 1.15pm – 1.20pm

Any child who arrives after the completion of the register will be recorded as late on the register.

5.2 Guidance on the Accurate Completion of Registers

It is a legal requirement that registers are completed accurately. Absences should be recorded in line with the codes contained within the registers. Registers should be returned to the school office promptly at the end of registration.

5.3 First Day Contact Between Parents and School

Parents should always inform the school of why their child is away by phoning by 9.00 am on the first day of absence. Should parents fail to telephone, the school will contact parents for an explanation of absence in accordance with the school's 'Ringback' guidance.

5.4 Guidance on Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absences are those absences where the school has been contacted by parents with a valid reason for a child's absence e.g. sickness, hospital appointment or in the exceptional case where a holiday form has been authorised by the Headteacher .(ref below).

Unauthorised absences are all unexplained or non-permissible absences.

5.5. Referral Routes for Pupils with Emerging Attendance Problems

Teaching staff should look out for a pattern in children's absence (eg. absence each Wednesday or whenever there is PE) and should discuss their concerns with the Headteacher. If there is a concern about a child's attendance this will be dealt with in discussion with the child's parents. The Headteacher will meet with the school's admin staff on a regular basis to discuss children whose attendance causes concern. Targets will be set for attendance on an annual basis with the aim that the overall attendance for St Mary's will always be above the national average.

Should a child's attendance fall below 95% for the current academic year;

1. Parents/Carers will receive a letter from the headteacher advising them of their child's attendance rate and offering support to improve their attendance (appendix 1)

2. If attendance continues to be a concern and no improvement is noted, a second letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of the need for urgent improvement (appendix 2)
3. Should attendance still fail to improve and become 'persistent absence' (i.e. below 90%), parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher and a governor to explore ways to improve their child's attendance. They will also be informed of the harm that persistent absence can cause to their child's education and well-being. An 'Attendance Improvement Plan' will be agreed.
4. If, following stage 3 (above), attendance remains below 90%, the headteacher will consider applying to Devon LA for a penalty notice to be issued.

5.6 Rewarding Good or Improving Attendance

We will celebrate excellent attendance at assemblies at the end of each term as well as recognising when children have made a dramatic and sustained improvement in their attendance.

5.7 Requests for Leave

Parents ***do not*** have an automatic right to holiday absence and holidays or other leave should not be taken in term time. A copy of our school term dates is readily available to all parents both from the school office and on the website.

Leave from school will not be authorised during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and will not be granted during any SATs period or run up to it.

Leave forms must be completed before the leave is taken and must be authorised by the Headteacher to be accepted as an authorised absence.

Devon LA will be informed if parents take extended unauthorised holiday absence; penalty notices will be issued.

6. WORKING TOGETHER.

At St. Mary's we believe that good attendance requires working together. We encourage parents to work with us and inform us of anything that is causing difficulties with attendance. Equally we believe in working with external agencies to support families and improve attendance. It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Responsibility to promote attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

A copy of our Attendance Policy can be viewed on the school website.

APPENDIX 1

St Mary's
Catholic Primary School



date

Dear xxxxxxxx,

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

I am writing to draw your attention to your child's current attendance figure below, which is lower than we would expect. This covers the period 20 September to 16 October 2017.

Xxxxxxx xxxxxx 86.84%

I do of course understand that children can be unwell and therefore absent from school sometimes. However, the more days they miss, the further they can fall behind their peers with their learning. I enclose a leaflet for your information, setting out our policy for school attendance and what percentages look like in terms of days lost. I would also remind you that children are not permitted to take holidays during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance eg. parent returning on leave from armed forces deployment.

I will continue to monitor your child's absence and contact you again should it fail to improve. If you have any questions, please speak to me.

Kind regards

Head Teacher

Living, loving and learning with God

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Website: www.stmarysaxminster.devon.sch.uk

APPENDIX 2

date

Dear.....

Name of Child:

Attendance since September 2017: (School Target = 96%)

Number of school days missed through absence:

Following my letter dated xxxxxx I am disappointed to note that xxxxxxxx's attendance has failed to improve.

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As I'm sure you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and we do all we can to work in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Please therefore contact the school if you would like to meet with me to discuss your child's attendance and how we can support you to improve it.

In the meantime, I will continue to monitor xxxxxx's attendance and hope to see a significant improvement by the end of November.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher