



Due for Review every year

Reviewed by Teaching & Learning Committee

Last Reviewed June 2016

Next Review June 2017

Mission: Living, loving and learning with God

Philosophy

St. Mary's Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient 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 problems 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.

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

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 admission roll.

Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work towards ensuring 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 and the Education Welfare Service

in developing and maintaining the 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.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of 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 Managers and the school governors (annually). Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

Procedures

Start and finishing times of registration.

Morning Registration. 8:55am – 9.15am

Afternoon Registration. 1.15pm – 1.20pm

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

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 Administrator's office promptly at the end of registration.

First day contact between parents and school.

Parents should always inform the school of why their child is away by phoning by 9.30 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.

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 eg. Sickness, hospital appointment or in the exceptional case where a holiday form has been authorised by the Headteacher.(See below). Unauthorised absences are all unexplained absences.

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. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% (which from 1 September 2015 is deemed by the Government to be 'persistent absence') will receive a letter from the Headteacher. The Headteacher will meet on a regular basis with the EWO to discuss children whose attendance causes concern and on an annual basis they will set targets for attendance for the coming year.

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 improvement in their attendance.

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 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 unless there are exceptional circumstances and will not be granted during any examination 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.

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 the Education Welfare Officer and other 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 the Attendance Policy can be viewed on the school website.