



# St Mary's RC Primary School

## Attendance

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### Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### Definitions

#### *Authorised absence*

- *An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.*
- *Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.*

#### *Unauthorised absence*

- *An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.*
- *Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.*

## **Expectations**

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

### Expectations of the School:

St Mary's RC Primary School will provide a safe learning environment, ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis and follow up all instances of poor attendance or punctuality.

### Expectations of parents/carers:

Parents/carers are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn;

Parents/carers will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school.

Parents/carers will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary. Parents/carers will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details.

### Expectations of pupils:

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person.

Pupils are expected to be ready to learn.

## **Doors Open**

School doors open at 8:55 am. Pupils are expected to line up in the playground before being brought in to school in a safe and orderly fashion by a member of staff. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8:55am without supervision.

## **Lateness**

Any pupil arriving after 8:55 am or 1.15 p.m. should report to the office.

Parents/carers, whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by the Headteacher, who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

## **Following Up Lateness**

Lateness is followed up by the Mrs Noble as School Business Manager in the first instance, or by Mr Wheatley, the Headteacher for persistent lateness.

The Headteacher is responsible for contacting parents/carers if their child is frequently late for school.

A whole school Rewards system are used to improve punctuality and attendance with 100% attendance certificates being awarded at the end of the School Year.

## **Absences**

Notification must be provided for all absences from school. Absences are authorised by designated staff within the school.

School may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.

The school accept reasons for absence from parents, guardians or other adult relative. The school may be notified via telephone, letter or e-mail.

All notifications must be given to office staff or class teacher. Notifications of absences are stored on SIMMS

Notifications are stored for seven years.

The school will authorise absence for exceptional circumstances for example:

Older sibling's graduation

Music or dance exams

Moving house

Religious observance

Family bereavement

Family Weddings

The school will not authorise absence for events that are within the control of the family to avoid:

Shopping

Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents/carers

Birthdays

Holidays in term time (regardless of personal circumstances).

The Headteacher is the only person in school who can authorise absences.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence is communicated to parents/carers via the leave of absence request form. In some cases, this may be followed up by letter.

### **Leaving and Returning to School Throughout the Day**

Pupils have to provide a letter or phone call from their parent/carer requesting that they be allowed to leave school.

Pupils are signed out of school by office staff, and signed in on their return to school.

The office staff are responsible in ensuring the signing in and out book is checked in the event of fire.

When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified.

### **Following Up Absence**

St Mary's RC Primary School follows up all absences from school.

If a pupil does not return to school after 3 days a phone call or text message from the school is used to follow up on the absence.

The school sends out letters to parents/carers with end of year reports to advise them of their child's attendance compared to national attendance expectations.

Pupils whose attendance is below the school target will be contacted via letter and/or phone by the Headteacher.

Prolonged or regular absence is dealt with via letters to parents/carers, meeting with parents/carers in school, involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer.

Other professionals may be alerted such as Children's services or a parent support worker.

Pupils are supported after a long term absence – eg. buddy to help with settling them back in, teachers alerted, time with class teacher to go over essential topics.

The office staff are responsible for making Education Welfare aware that a pupil has been taken off roll.

The same procedures to settling a pupil back into school after a period of absence would also be used the event of a pupil returning after an exclusion from school for more than 3 days.

### **First Day Response**

St Mary's RC Primary School uses First Day Response for pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.

The information needed to carry out the calls is stored in the SIMMS system. First Day Response calls/messages are made that day.

Telephone contact list updated via data collection sheets.

The First Day Response is used to update the registers. The office staff receiving information are able to update the registers.

First Day Response information is collated and disseminated to the class teacher.

### **Term Time Holidays**

St Mary's RC Primary School actively discourages parents/carers from taking family holidays during Term Time.

Parents/carers are made aware of the school ethos regarding Term-time holidays via the newsletter, website, new parent meetings etc.

Parents/carers request a holiday in Term-time in writing using the request for leave form.

Parents/carers are required to submit a request as soon as possible.

Parents/carers are made aware that a retrospective request will not be granted holidays are not authorised during term times.

A record is kept of pupils taking term time holidays

### **Early Intervention**

Identify children with poor attendance and target for support.

An individual integration plan will be written for pupils who have come back from long term absence.

### **Publication of Information**

Parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis.

St Mary's RC Primary School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents/carers, pupils and staff.

### **Truancy**

St Mary's RC Primary School works with pupils, parents/carers, teachers and other appropriate professionals to ensure that truancy by individual pupils does not occur.

Parents/carers are advised if their child is found to have played truant via a phone call from the Headteacher.

All parents/carers should be advised from the Headteacher that if a child is found to be missing from school premises, the police will be informed.

Truancy would also attract punishment via the school Behaviour and Discipline policy.

### **Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA Link Inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

*Michael Currie*

Chair of Governors

