



## **Attendance Policy October 2017**

Signed.....COG

.....HEAD

Next review: October 2020

## **Introduction**

St Mary's CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **School Procedures**

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as 'N' No reason yet given for the absence. If after 5 school days no reason is provided by the parent it should be recorded as 'O' unauthorised absence.

## **Registration**

1. Registration takes place at 8.50am and 1.00pm. Registers will be completed at these times and electronically sent to the office straight away. Registers will be completed using the standard codes. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8.50am**. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes until 9.10am and then they will be closed. The afternoon registration will be at 1.00pm The registers will close at 1.20pm.
2. Any pupil arriving after 9.10am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.
3. Pupils arriving in the school grounds **after** the bell has sounded at **8.50am** but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late '**L**' before registers close.

4. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day of absence. If no reason is given after 5 school days the absence will be given a 'O' code which is an unauthorised absence.
5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure that these appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation. The school can then code this absence

### **Persistent Late Arrival At School.**

Persistent late arrival at school will be defined as arriving in school after 8.50am on 3 or more occasions per half term. Parents / carers will receive a letter reminding them that children need to be lined up with their class on the playground when the bell sounds at 8.50am and that it is important that children have a good start to the day by arriving on time. If the family continue to arrive in school late they will be offered a meeting with the Home School Community Link Worker to look at what support is needed to ensure a safe and timely arrival in school each day. The school reserves the right to issue an attendance contract if lateness continues. A referral can be made to the County Attendance and Engagement Team who can take legal action and issue a fine.

### **Absence from School**

#### **First Day Of Absence**

If the office has not received information from a parent / carer about a child's absence by 9.20am they will send a text via the truancy call system to the parent/ carer to ask them to contact the school.

If there is no initial response by 10am then the school office or HSCLW will ring the parents / carers. If there is still no response from the phone call then it will be referred to the Safeguarding Leads who may wish to involve the Home School Community Link Worker, who may make a home visit.

Once the child returns to school if there is still no explanation given after 5 school days it will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

#### **Third Day Of Absence**

If the pupil is absent with no contact from the parents / carers for three days a standard letter will be sent asking the parents / carers to contact the school to explain the absence. Parents / carers can contact the school by telephone, email or in person.

#### **Continuing Absence**

If the absence continues up to 7 days then a further letter will be sent asking for the parent / carer to contact the school immediately.

## **Ten Day Of Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council. **This is a legal requirement.** The school will include details of the action they have taken.

## **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Home School Link Worker via the office staff to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parents / carers.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward. The school will issue an Attendance Contract to parents / carers which will clearly define the responsibilities of the parent/ carer and those of the school to ensure that the child level of attendance improves.

## **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

A. To his age, ability and aptitude and

B. To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent / Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;

They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation.

They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence.

Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents / carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent / carer could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

### **Leave of Absence**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Head Teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Head Teacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

## **Attendance Awards**

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

Certificates are issued at half terms and end of terms to children who have improved or 100% attendance. Other incentive awards, such as house points may also be awarded.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are: 96.5%

Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) – alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made; these also need preserving for at least three years.

Entries in paper registers must be in ink;

All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The registers must be safely stored. All registers are taken electronically by the class teachers and any paper copies of a weekly register are kept securely in the school office. In the event of a fire or fire drill paper copies of the register are brought to each class by the office staff in order that all pupils can be accounted for. They are then returned to the office.

## **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

### **1. Unauthorised Absence - Code O**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

### **2. Authorised Absence.**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**