



**St Mary's Catholic  
Primary School  
Bognor Regis**

# **Attendance Policy**

**Policy Review**

**Date Agreed**      **April 2021**

**Reviewed**          **March 2022**

## **Attendance**

The Governing body of St Mary's Catholic Primary School places a high priority on excellent pupil attendance and punctuality. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must keen and eager to attend school and regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 96% attendance throughout the school.

This policy applies to all children registered at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School and is available to view on our school website.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance at school. The Headteacher and Governors also work closely with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and develop large educational gaps which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% or below each year, will over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy has been written to ensure that all staff and governors of our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance and that parents/carers are aware of the procedures they need to follow when their child is absent from school.

## **School Procedures**

St Mary's will aim to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes;
- To maintain appropriate attendance data;
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils;
- To collate daily information of any absences or lateness;
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school;
- To inform parents/carers of circumstances that constitute authorised and unauthorised absence;
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time;
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil attendance and punctuality;
- To liaise with the Pupil Entitlement Team regarding any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to the schools attempts to contact them or to put in place initiatives recommended by the school to help improve attendance;
- To report attendance statistics to the PEI Team as and when requested;

- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.

## **Parent/Carer Procedures**

### **Absence Reporting**

If a child for any reason is unable to attend school, parents/carers are required to inform the school on the morning of each absence before 9:30am. There are a number of ways in which this can be done.

**Option 1** – Telephone the school and leave a message on the absence reporting line.

**Option 2** – Use ParentMail to log a child's absence.

**Option 3** – Speak with a member of the office team on the morning of the absence.

## **Definitions of absence**

### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classed as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness and the school has received notification from the parent/carers. The school may request proof of a doctor's visit if they feel this is required as part of the recording process. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated a number of periods of absence due to illness, the school may write to the parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.
- If a child is absent for an exceptional circumstance/religious reason that has been pre-approved by the Headteacher. (An absence authorisation request form must be completed in both cases, prior to the period of absence. See appendix 1)

### **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classed as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school or the failure of the parent/carers to inform the school of the reason for absence.
- If a pupil remains absent without prior consent and contact has not been made with the parents/carers within 10 days, the absence will be reported to the Pupil Entitlement Team (Please refer to the Children Missing Education Policy)

## **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school before 9.00 am each morning. All late pupils will then enter the school through the main entrance. If a pupil arrives late the office staff will ask the parent to sign them in using the electronic IPad or late book. **All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for the purposes of fire regulations.**

The register officially closes at **9:00am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked as late up until **9:30am**. **From 9:30am** onwards a pupil will be marked as absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

During the morning any absences will be recorded onto SIMS. **(See Appendix 2 for Attendance codes)** If no reason has been given for an absence the office team will try to make contact with the parent/carer, to ascertain the reason for absence. **Half a school day of absence is classed as 1 session missed.**

Pupil attendance is regularly monitored and those that fall 95% or below are highlight to the Headteacher for continued monitoring and action.

Where persistent incidents of lateness/absence have been identified parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will request a meeting with the parent/carer to agree action points for improvement.

### **Lateness**

As a school we expect our pupils to be punctual and on time so that they learn the importance of this life skill. Children who arrive late miss valuable learning time and disrupt the flow of lessons.

### **Dentist/Doctors/Hospital Appointments**

Where reasonably possible all appointments should be made out of school hours. If this is not possible then the appointment card must be brought into school on the day of the appointment so that a copy can be taken for the attendance records.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School**

In line with The Department for Education guidelines, school are unable to authorise any absence requests during term time unless exceptional circumstances can be shown. It is at the Heads discretion, based on their assessment of the situation if an absence request is exceptional and this can vary from school to school.

If you need to make a request for absence an Absence Request Form will need to be completed and submitted to the Headteacher. (See appendix 1) **There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.**

A week's absence for holiday and a week's absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. **The government considered attendance unacceptable below 95%.**

## APPENDIX 1



### **Absence Authorisation Request In Exceptional Circumstances**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Child's Name</b>  |  |
| <b>D.O. B</b>  |  |
| <b>Year Group</b>  |  |
| <b>Name of person making the request &amp; relationship to the child</b> |  |
| <b>Address</b>   |  |
| <b>Contact Number</b>  |  |
| <b>Dates your child will be absent from school</b>                       |  |

**Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional.** There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents/carers must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The Headteacher can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the Heads discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A week's absence for holiday and a week's absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. **The government considered attendance unacceptable below 95%.**

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the Headteacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

#### **(Cont.' overleaf)**

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Why is this absence exceptional? |
|                                  |

**(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)**

**Declaration:**

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

**Signed:**

**Full Name:**

**Date:**

Unless further information is required a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Attendance codes**

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into SIMS and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absence.

| <b>Code</b> | <b>School Meaning</b>                                  | <b>Statistical Meaning</b> | <b>Physical Meaning</b> |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| /           | Present (AM)   | Present                    | In for whole session    |
| \           | Present (PM)   | Present                    | In for whole session    |
| B           | Educated off site<br>(Not dual registration)           | Approved Edu Activity      | Out for whole session   |
| C           | Other authorised circumstances                         | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| D           | Dual registration<br>(Attending another establishment) | Present                    | Out for whole session   |
| E           | Excluded   | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| F           | Extended family holiday (agreed)                       | Authorised absence         | Out for whole session   |
| G           | Family holiday (not agreed)                            | Unauthorised Absence       | Out for whole session   |
| H           | Family holiday (agreed)                                | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| I           | Illness (not med/dental etc.)                          | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| J           | Interview  | Approved Edu Activity      | Out for whole session   |
| L           | Late (before reg closed)                               | Present                    | Late for session        |
| M           | Medical/Dental appointments                            | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| N           | No reason yet provided for absence                     | Unauthorised Absence       | Out for whole session   |
| O           | Unauthorised absence                                   | Unauthorised Absence       | Out for whole session   |
| P           | Approved sporting activity                             | Present                    | Out for whole session   |
| R           | Religious observance                                   | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| S           | Study leave  | Approved Edu Activity      | Out for whole session   |
| T           | Traveller absence                                      | Authorised Absence         | Out for whole session   |
| U           | Late ( after registers closed)                         | Unauthorised absence       | Late for session        |
| V           | Educational visit or trip                              | Approved Edu Activity      | Out for whole session   |
| W           | Work experience  | Approved Edu Activity      | Out for whole session   |
| #           | School closed to pupils and staff                      | Attendance not required    | Out for whole session   |
| Y           | Enforced closure                                       | Attendance not required    | Out for whole session   |
| X           | Non-compulsory school age absence                      | Attendance not required    | Out for whole session   |
| Z           | Pupil not on roll                                      | Attendance not required    | Out for whole session   |
| -           | All should attend / No mark                            | No mark for session        | No mark recorded        |