



St Mary & St John CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Within our tradition as a Church of England (VA) Primary School, we are committed to making St Mary & St John an inclusive environment, fostering curiosity, spirituality, creativity and respect. At our school we want everyone to be valued, to explore the joy of learning, and to achieve their full potential.

Aims

This policy has been developed within St Mary & St John Primary School to ensure an effective approach to attaining and promoting high levels of pupil attendance. We want children at our school to develop good habits of punctuality and attendance, to allow them the maximum opportunity to explore the joy of learning and achieve their full potential as described in our mission statement.

This policy provides clear guidelines about how we will promote and attain high levels of pupil attendance. This will ensure that all stakeholders understand the school's expectations of themselves, and each other, and can strive to attain them.

Objectives

1. To promote partnership between parents/carers and the school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
2. To ensure good progress for all children
3. To encourage a positive attitude to punctuality and attendance
4. To achieve a 96.5% + attendance rate
5. To involve other agencies when all possible school-based supportive measures have been put in place and a child's attendance is still cause for concern

The policy will give clear guidance on expectations and procedures for pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

Procedures for implementation

Expectations of parents/carers:

- To make sure their children attend school, aiming for an attendance rate of 96.5% to 100%
- To contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (e.g. before 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend

- To make sure any absence is followed by a written or spoken explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day
- To make sure that their child arrives in school on time, well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To try to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours
- To not take children out of school for holidays, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances
- To not take children out of school for occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

Expectations of pupils:

- To attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 96.5% to 100%
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day

Expectations of school:

- To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance
- To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted
- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence
- To make early contact with parents/carers when a child fails to attend
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- To model good attendance as described in the staff absence policy

Expectations of governors:

- To monitor the effectiveness of this policy through regular Attendance reports (to Curriculum Committee) and Headteacher reports (to Governing Body)
- To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling in the case of parent governors

School procedures related to attendance

Registration

Doors open at 8:40am, and all children should be in class by 8:50am. Registers will be taken before 9.00am. Children arriving at school after the register has been taken but before 9:30am will be classed as late. If a child arrives after 9.30am this will be recorded as an absence.

Unauthorised absence

If no information regarding the absence of a child has been received by 9.00am, the office will telephone a parent/carer to check the reason for absence. If there is no initial reason given for the absence, either verbal or written, or no letter of explanation is received on the child's return, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Authorised absence

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Headteacher, or delegated to another member of the school leadership team, following statutory requirements and the school's policy on attendance.

Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from a parent/carer that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and a note or verbal explanation on the child's return, if the absence is longer than one day.

If the child has an urgent medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, parents/carers must inform the school in advance. If the school has been informed in advance, the child's absence will be considered as an authorised absence. Where possible other siblings should remain in school. The school expects children to return from appointments as soon as possible. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents/carers.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents/carers give a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request that the parent/carer provides confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Persistent lateness

If a child arrives after the register has been taken but before 9.30am it will be recorded that the child arrived late. If lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with the school to address the issues, the matter can be referred to the Oxfordshire County Council Attendance and Engagement Team, who will offer support. The school may issue a parenting contract.

Holidays during term time

There will be no authorised holidays in term time (Pupil Registration Regulations, 1st September 2013). Requests for absence in term time will be considered in exceptional circumstances and at the Headteacher's discretion. If a request for absence is not authorised but the parent/carer still chooses to take their child out of school, the school will contact the County Attendance Team and a penalty of at least £60 per parent/carer per child will be issued. This penalty will escalate to £120 per parent/carer per child if not paid promptly. If this penalty remains unpaid parents/carers will receive a summons to Oxford Magistrate Court. Children may be taken off the school roll after twenty continuous unauthorised days out of school (four weeks) from the start of their absence. The Oxfordshire County Council Engagement Team will then be informed.

Response to non-attendance

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents/carers, the parents/carers will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by the parents/carers. Where there has been no response, or no explanation, the school will visit the home address.

If a child's attendance is below 90%, the school will initially contact parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the school leadership team will invite the parents/carers in to discuss the issue.

If a child is repeatedly late, the school will contact parents/carers expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the school leadership team will invite the parents/carers in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance and Engagement Team if appropriate.

Strategies for promoting good attendance

- Attendance data will be checked termly (six times a year) by the staff to identify any issues
- Attendance will be discussed regularly at staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns
- A class attendance certificate and toy monkey will be awarded 6 times a year
- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school, will be promoted in assemblies and PHSE sessions
- Parents/carers can receive reports on their child's level of attendance at parent-teacher consultation meetings (twice a year) and in an annual report (once a year)

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness

The school leadership team will analyse attendance data at the end of each of the six terms to identify issues and trends.

The school will work closely with the Council Attendance and Engagement Team in their monitoring of the attendance and registration procedures in the school.

The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance percentage against their target throughout the year.

Attendance will be reported to the Curriculum Committee and the Governing Body through regular Attendance and Headteacher reports.

Separate arrangements apply to children in their Reception year at Comper.

Policy approved (GB meeting) and adopted – October 2019;
further amendments approved (GB meeting) December 2019
Review date – May 2021