



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction

It is a legal requirement for all children to receive full-time education. DOE policy states that: "Parents should ensure their children attend school regularly, arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn".

Irregular attendance will undermine the education of your child. A low attendance rate will seriously slow down your child's educational progress; affect their learning and their friendships.

Expectations

The Governors at St Mary's expect every child's attendance to be 96% or above.

We expect all children to arrive promptly to school each morning.

Reception Year: Children can be taken into Reception class at **08:40**. Start at **08:50**

Key Stage 1: Pupils to make their way into their classes from **08:40** for Wake and Shake activities. Start at **08:50**

Key Stage 2: Pupils to go straight to class from **08:40** for Wake and Shake activities. Start at **08:50**

12:45 Reception lunchtime ends

13:00 Key Stage 1 lunchtime ends

13:25 Key Stage 2 lunchtime ends

Any pupil arriving after the stated start times will be recorded as late and their minutes late will be recorded.

Authorised Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence (**not the parent/carer**) after there has been communication between the parent and school. Absence can be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness

- Family bereavement
- Once in a life-time events e.g. sibling graduation
- Medical appointments

It is up to you to inform the school in advance or on the day of absence. If we do not hear from you a member of the administration team will contact you.

Medway Council regularly undertake Truancy Sweeps in conjunction with the police. If you need to take your child out of school for an appointment during the day you must collect a pass from the office.

Unauthorised Absence

Any pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as unauthorised absence which may result in the issuing of a penalty notice (unless the office has been previously notified). The Penalty Notice requires each parent to pay a fine of £120 within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a Court Case.

Absences will not be authorised if:

- Another member of the family is ill
- The family have overslept or had a late night
- There are problems with uniform/clothing
- You take more days holiday than approved
- You have forgotten school dates
- There is an annual family event such as a birthday
- Your child attends a medical/dental appointment for more than ½ a day without written proof this is necessary
- You take your child shopping
- You are taking a family holiday

Leave in school time

Leave should not be taken in school time due to the inevitable disruption caused to learning.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school. In law you must apply for permission in advance for leave. Requests should be made in writing at least 2 weeks, preferably a month, prior to the date. Only in very “**exceptional circumstances**”* will leave be granted and this will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Parents will receive written confirmation of their request within 10 days of the request being received by the school. Pupils will **not** be granted leave if:

- It is during SATs in Y6
- It is the first week of the academic year

An ***Exceptional Circumstance** counts as:

- Family bereavement of a close relative
- Once in a life-time event e.g. sibling/parent graduation, close family wedding, parent accident or extreme illness
- Attending a short one off special event e.g. dance/sport/music competition or audition

School terms and dates

Medway Council publish academic dates two years in advance for all Medway schools. The information is available on the Medway Council Website (look under *Schools, Early Years and Childcare – useful information for parents is a sub-section called ‘School Terms and Holiday Dates’*). The school will set an additional five INSET days.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Holiday taken without the school’s permission, or if the student fails to return on the agreed date, will mean absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions, parents may be liable to a penalty notice. The penalty notice requires each parent to pay a fine of £120 within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in a Court Case. If a child is absent for a period of 10 unauthorised sessions in a six week period, a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools will be made and a penalty issued.

The legal responsibility for ensuring pupils attends school regularly and punctually rests with parents/carers.

Lateness

Lateness is entered onto the computer and becomes part of your child’s school report. Regular lateness may also be referred to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner. Please ensure that your child is brought to school on time.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at Open Evening and may be referred to the Home/School Support Worker and/or the Attendance Advisory Practitioner. This can provide grounds for prosecution.

Monitoring Attendance

The school has a five-step approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all these stages or even to carry them out in the order listed.

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| Step 1 | First day calling for all pupils if we have not heard from you and Home/School Support Worker visits as appropriate. |
| Step 2 | Regular checks of attendance figures with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner with the possibility of a letter being sent home as a result. |
| Step 3 | We will refer low attendance to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner for further action. |
| Step 4 | Parents will be invited to a school attendance clinic or attendance panel, chaired by the Attendance Advisory Practitioner/ or parents will receive a home visit from the Attendance Advisory Practitioner. |
| Step 5 | Parents will receive a formal letter from the Attendance Advisory Practitioner leading to prosecution if there is no improvement. |

Persistent Absence

Reporting persistent absence to Medway Council is required each term, (six times a year). Persistent absence is defined as being any absence regardless of whether it is authorised or not from school for on average 10 sessions (5 days) in any one term.

Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Lead notifies Children's Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation. A pupil who does not attend without explanation on the am session for school; this will be followed up within 24 hours.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Telephone the school office before 9.30am on the first day of your child's absence.
2. Notify the school well in advance of any medical appointments.
3. Collect a School Pass in advance of any appointments.
4. Respond to school enquiries about unexplained absence.
5. Provide evidence, such as a letter from the hospital, appointment cards from the doctors, medical prescriptions.
6. Keep us well informed of any ongoing medical conditions your child has that may affect their attendance.
7. Make sure you have alternative arrangements for a friend or relative to get your child to school in an emergency or if you feel unwell.
8. If you do not have an alternative contact, we may be able to help.
9. If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, bring them anyway. They often perk up during the day but we will contact you if they do not.

10. If your child has a well-known childhood illness, contact the school for advice on recovery time. We have all the up-to-date information.
11. If your child has a medical appointment, they should return to school after the appointment, or if the appointment is not first thing in the morning, your child should come to school before the appointment.

Signed _____ Date _____