



St Mary's C of E Primary School Attendance Policy (Pupil) – 2020-2021

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of St Mary's C of E School are committed, in partnership with the parents / carers, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community are proud.

Regular attendance is key to staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

All pupils must:

- Attend school 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher.
- Attend school punctually at the start of the day in time for registration.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.

All parents will:

- Encourage 100% school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence by **9.20am** or sooner if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- If the school has not heard by 9.20am from a parent, someone in the office will attempt to contact parents to establish a reason for the absence. If after 6 sessions we have not heard back from anyone on the contact list and to explain the absence, the authorities will be informed so a welfare check can be undertaken.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, eg a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.



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- Meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that whenever possible, pupils are consulted in all the decisions that relate to them.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the pupil is being collected.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and signed back in on their return (This must be completed using the Inventory Sign In / Out process).
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site and complete the Inventory Sign In / Out process.

Punctuality / Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a pupil's teacher is important. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time ready to enter the school building **by 8.45am**.

- Registration takes place by 9am and by 1pm and pupils who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded as late for school – coded 'L' on the registration certificate
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence – 'U' on the registration certificate - and can be subject to referral to the Education Welfare Officer and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Persistent lateness before close of register by a pupil will be dealt with through school.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform us soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

Authorised Absence

Absence will only be authorised by the Head Teacher for

- Genuine illness.
- Compassionate grounds or for **exceptional circumstances**.
- A date which is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong.

Please note that any absence for illness that runs before or after this absence will not be authorised without medical evidence and could result in the absence becoming 5 days or more. Please also note that where illness is regular or extensive then it may not be authorised without medical evidence.



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Request for Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In the event of the need for authorisation of an absence, a Leave of Absence Application Form must be completed. The form is available from the school office and also on the school's website. Once completed, please submit the form to the school office for consideration by the headteacher. **Consideration will then be given only** in the event of **exceptional circumstances** and if the application is sent by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

The headteacher may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's leave of absence without school authorisation.

Penalty Notices

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave of absence, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Education Welfare Officer if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. This includes unauthorised absence due to late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- **£60 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 (per parent per child) within 28 days.**
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child per parent.

Deleting a Pupil from the Admission Register

As from September 2013, a school can delete a child's name from the admission register, where a pupil is granted leave of absence and the pupil fails to return to school within 10 days following the expiry of the period of leave granted, the head does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness and where the school and LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is.

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 schooldays, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent school weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school and Education Welfare Officers.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.



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For further information about attendance and absence please see Surrey County Council's website www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence

Policy written by: Jacquie Chambers (Headteacher)

Next review due: Spring 2022



Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances 2020-2021

Please read the following guidance carefully

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Name of child(ren): | Class(es): |
| I am applying for leave of absence for my child for | |
| from: | to: |
| Number of school days: | |
| The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested: | |
| Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO | |
| If YES, please five dates and details: | |



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| I also have children at... | |
| Signed: | Date: |
| Address: | |

| To be completed by the Headteacher | | |
|--|--|---|
| Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is: | | |
| Child's attendance level over the last 12 months: | | |
| Our overall school target for attendance this year is: | | % |
| Approved | | The absence will be recorded as authorised. |
| Not approved | | The absence will be recorded as unauthorised. |
| Explanatory notes: | | |
| | | |
| Signed: (Headteacher) | | Date: |



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