



Policy for Attendance

The policy was reviewed and amended during the summer term 2011 approved by governors in January 2013. Reviewed and amended during the autumn term 2014 approved by governors

**Reviewed September 2016
Reviewed June 2017**

St. Mark's Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Aims of the School:

At St. Mark's Church of England Primary School we:

- ***Build Christian values into the ethos and teaching and enable children to make their own informed choices about their faith;***
- ***Strive to develop the full potential of all our pupils;***
- ***Give a high priority to the spiritual development of all in the school community;***
- ***Place collective worship at the centre of our daily life;***
- ***Welcome all children, whatever their parents' beliefs, attaching a high priority to strong links between school, home and parish.***

Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to belong and learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. Our school is a bullying-free place.

Aims of the policy:

The aim of the policy is to facilitate the pupils' regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to take the fullest advantage of the learning experience available to them.

Statutory Framework.

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. If a child fails to attend regularly the parent/carer is guilty of an offence.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at St Mark's, Elm Tree School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community; pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

97%+ attendance is expected.

Below 97% will be monitored and if attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will be asked to attend an interview with the Head Teacher.

School and the local authority will use penalty notice procedures with regard to unauthorised holidays in term time. See the letter at appendix C.

Parents/carers and students can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parent/carer when a student fails to attend school without providing a good reason (this will usually be a telephone call)

- Prompt and confidential action on any identified problems.
- Strategies to be taken to promote good attendance (Appendix C)
- Encouragement of good attendance and punctuality
- A firm and consistent response to all absenteeism.

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually (registers completed at 8.50am and 12.50pm KS2 and 1.00 pm KS1)
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.
- That they avoid making routine medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

We expect that pupils:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

Registration

Electronic registers will be called promptly at 8.50 am and at 12.50 pm (KS2) and 1.20 pm (KS1) and will be completed in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register. Pupils arriving after the registration period will be noted in a separate book, those who are within 30 minutes of morning registration (15 minutes for afternoon registration) will be marked as late (L) if after this time will be marked as arriving after the register has closed (U). The parents of any pupils arriving late at school and unaccompanied will be contacted for an explanation.

The electronic school doors are open at 8.40, children who arrive after 8.50 am are classed as late. Children will need to enter school via the main entrance.

Monitoring Attendance

Early intervention will include communication with parents/carers, by telephone. If contact cannot be made we will continue to attempt to make contact by telephone. If contact is not made the Pupil welfare officer (PWO) may visit the home address. If the class teacher has concerns about a pupil's attendance those concerns should be discussed with the Head Teacher.

If attendance falls below 97% the PWO. will contact the parents/carers to raise the school's concerns and offer any guidance and support. If attendance improves, there should be no further action. (Appendix D)

If attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will be contacted by letter (see Appendix B) to attend an interview with the Head Teacher. If there is not an improvement in attendance and it falls below 80% then a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer will may be made. Support will be offered, but ultimately it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure attendance and they can be prosecuted if this does not happen.

Weekly register checks of attendance rate will be carried out (this will include attendance and punctuality).

Promoting good attendance and punctuality.

School will provide a stimulating learning environment and a lively curriculum that strives to meet the needs of all the pupils

Data generated through monitoring will be used to promote a positive attitude to good attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance and punctuality is celebrated in worship weekly and in class.

Annually those children with 100% in both attendance and punctuality will be rewarded with a prize, certificates will also be awarded for pupils with 97%+ attendance and no lates. Each term there will also be an Attendance and Punctuality Treat for those pupils achieving 97%+ attendance and never late; this will be decided by consultation with Parliament. Medical appointments are taken into consideration.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The following criteria must be used consistently when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil was absent with leave granted by the head teacher of the school.
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils' parents belong.
- No suitable transport arrangements have been made by the LA for a child, registered at the school but not within walking distance.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444(6) are met.

- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is attending an interview at another school in connection with an application for a place at that school.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. the graduation of an older sibling, parent's wedding).

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional circumstances (e.g. a birthday).

Holidays

Please see Stockton LA guidance for the issuing of penalty notices appended with this policy.

Schools in 1Excellence multi -academy trust will act in accordance with this guidance.

Appendix B

Dear

After monitoring all children's attendance, I have noticed that your child's attendance is currently ...%.

I would like to invite you to an informal discussion about your child's attendance to see if we are able to offer you or your child any support with issues that may be preventing your child attending school more regularly.

The date and time for our discussion are.....

Please inform school if you are unable to attend and we will offer you a further appointment.

You may also wish to speak to our parent support adviser, Kath Allan who may be able to help. She can be contacted via the school office.

I look forward to meeting with you,

Yours sincerely

Mrs V Hall

Head Teacher

Mrs V Hall
Head Teacher

Dear

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (d.o.b.....) out of school for a holiday during term time during the dates.....to

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that leave of absence may only be authorised by the proprietor of the school (the Head teacher) where -

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **special circumstances** relating to the holiday request.

After carefully considering your application I have decided **not to authorise** your request for holiday leave as I am not satisfied that the special circumstances criteria has been met.

Childs name is expected in school during these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to **£120** fine
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school everyday.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher