



St. Mary's Bluecoat Primary School

Whole School Policy on Attendance, Absence and Punctuality

The Law

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special need he/she may have,

...by regular attendance at school...”

(Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7)

PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's Bluecoat Primary School is committed to the provision of a full, rich, efficient and appropriate education for all of its pupils and acknowledges that education is vital to raising the aspirations of all pupils.

St. Mary's Bluecoat Primary School is committed to a clear philosophy that regular attendance at school is a legal requirement and that unnecessary absence will be challenged and where appropriate, unauthorised. An ethos designed to enthuse, encourage and foster self-esteem is a vital contributory factor toward the achievement of the school's targets on attendance and punctuality.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To enable maximum pupil attendance by encouraging parents to support their children in taking full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular punctual attendance and:

- a) to establish and sustain improved levels of attendance in line with OfSTED recommendation of 97%
- b) to report levels of unauthorised absence to support the work of the Education Access Service
- c) to ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are effective and applied consistently in practice
- d) to ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliable and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources

- e) to identify pupils and groups of pupils where absence is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced
- f) to promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents and pupils is aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution
- g) to establish working partnerships with parents, the Education Access Service, and all other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.

PRINCIPLES

Every child has the right to efficient, full time education; we recognise that regular attendance on the part of all pupils is important and an environment is provided where all pupils feel valued and welcomed.

Class Teachers

Maintain accurate records of attendance for their class, following given registration procedures at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions.

Inform office staff immediately if problems occur with the completion of registers.

Record attendance data for individual pupils on annual reports to parents.

Keep evidence of absence notes, and records of telephone and verbal messages, which explain absences.

Are vigilant and inform the Attendance Co-ordinator (currently the school administrator) if any pupil is giving cause for concern.

Produce study packs when appropriate for any long term absences or fixed term exclusions.

The Attendance Co-ordinator

Monitors registers on a weekly basis to check for trends in absence and punctuality in relation to gender, ethnic background, year groups, seasonal patterns, and the nature of authorised absences. Problems will be followed up either by the co-ordinator (or the class teacher if deemed more appropriate).

Is responsible for arranging meetings and liaising with the school's EWO.

In collaboration with the class teacher, will monitor pupil's attendance difficulties on an individual basis.

Collates attendance data and reports this to Governors.

Supports and updates strategies to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality.

Ensures that all members of staff are following guidelines on completing registers.

Provides evidence of action the school has taken in individual circumstances.

The Executive Headteacher

Develops strategies to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality.

Monitors and reports on attendance, providing whole school data for internal and external use as deemed appropriate.

Ensures parents/carers are informed regularly about attendance procedures and the criteria for authorising absence. This information is put into the school prospectus for 'new' parent/carers and on the reverse of all leave of absence requests. A summary statement is often on the weekly newsletter.

Ensures that parent/carers are aware of the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and other PD days when a pupil is not expected to attend school.

Can authorise absences due to ill health but is not obliged to do so and should not do so when there is any doubt about the reason for the absence.

Regularly informs Governors about rates of attendance, raising their awareness of strategies used to maintain and improve attendance and punctuality.

Ensures that all registers are kept for a period of three years.

Determines whether Leave of absence in term time is to be authorised or unauthorised and has a duty to report all unauthorised L.A.T.T to the EWO.

Office Staff (often also the Attendance Co-ordinator)

Take telephone messages when pupils are absent from school and inform class teacher.

Compile a list of all pupils arriving late and make necessary amendments to registers (through parents signing the late book).

Make 'First Day' calls after the completion of registers each day and maintain a record of calls and responses.

Record all pupils leaving the school premises other than at the end of the school day (through parents signing in/out in book).

Pupils

That they will attend school regularly.

That they will arrive on time for registration periods and lessons and be appropriately dressed and otherwise prepared for the school day.

That they will inform a member of staff of any difficulty that may hinder their attendance at school.

That their behaviour is such that it does not conflict with the day to day running of the school.

Parent and Carers

Ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a condition fit to learn. This is a legal duty.

To contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend school, where possible, on the first day of absence.

Should provide school with a telephone number on which they can be contacted.

To positively engage with the school and inform appropriate members of staff of any issue/problem which may hinder their child's regular attendance at school, including discipline and behaviour in school. Take family holidays in the school holiday period. Where this is not possible, parents/carers should complete a Leave of absence in term time request, available from the school office, to request time away from school. We strongly recommend that you request permission before planning any leave of absence. The request should be made by the parent or carer with whom the child lives. This is the case even where it is another person who wishes to take the child out of school. If your child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the Executive Headteacher the absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the local authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school. Parents/carers should never simply discount the amount of a penalty notice from the cost of a cheaper holiday, because this is a criminal offence and when doing so they are always risking prosecution.

The Governing Body

Through the school website, publishes dates of school holidays for the admission school year and the times at which each school session begins and ends.

Reviews the school policy on Attendance at regular intervals.

Agree challenging targets for attendance.

The LA

Has a duty to ensure that individual pupils attend school regularly and also to help schools in relation to the overall levels of absence and lateness.

Collects and publishes attendance data on a regular basis and provides updated guidelines to schools.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Investigates causes of absenteeism.

Develops links between home and school.

Provides support to families by home visits when needed.

Works to maintain close co-operation with all services dealing with families in difficulty.

Liaises regularly with the Attendance Co-ordinator and provides comprehensive feedback on all action taken.

Attends case conferences and prepares court cases.

Visits the school regularly to liaise with the Attendance Co-ordinator, The EHT and be available as a telephone contact outside of these visits.

Will hold attendance clinics/trawls in school as part of agreed strategic time if required.

Identifies attendance targets with the Attendance Co-ordinator.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for Registration

It is acknowledged that consistency of practice within school is essential.

Electronic registers will be completed twice a day at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Morning registration is 8:55am until 9:00am (although the bell is rung at 8:50am to allow children time to settle into their classroom) and afternoon registration is at 1:00pm.

The correct codes must be used when completing registers.

A fire attendance list is also kept by class teachers. This will ensure that a register can be taken out should there be a fire/emergency on site.

Staff should be aware of possible patterns of both authorised and unauthorised absence and inform the Executive Headteacher or the school's Attendance Co-ordinator, if there is a concern.

Any child arriving after 8:55am will report to the school office. The child will be recorded as late- L, providing acceptable reasons are offered. A child arriving after 9:25am may be recorded as late – U – unauthorised. The register will be updated by either office staff or the Attendance Co-ordinator.

Office staff will also maintain a log of children arriving late with reasons for lateness.

The Attendance Co-ordinator will monitor and follow up any issues/concerns.

At the end of every term or on request of the EWO the termly totals and percentages are calculated by the use of the SIMS computer system.

Notes and messages regarding absences are confidential and should remain in the registers until the Attendance Co-ordinator removes them.

The registers are then stored in the school office for safekeeping. At the end of each academic year, the notes are archived and kept for three years.

The Register is a legal document and the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Any removal of a child from the register must comply with Regulation 8.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Only the school within the context of the law can approve absence, not parent/carers. The fact that parent/carer has offered a note or other notification for a particular absence does not necessarily mean that the school will authorise it.

Schools may approve absences as authorised when they accept that there is a valid reason for a pupil to be absent. Otherwise, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. Examples of unauthorised absences include the car not starting (unless in exceptional circumstances), shopping, birthdays and going for a haircut.

Managing illness during the school day

If a pupil is ill, parents will be informed for the pupil to be collected from Reception. Parents sign to say that their child is leaving.

In exceptional circumstances, emergency services may be contacted if there is any delay in the parents arrival at school or in the interests of the welfare of the child, when parents will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Following up absence

Class teachers should always be alert for patterns of absence and inform the co-ordinator.

First Day calls made by office staff.

The EWO may become involved if problems persist. The referral process will need to be followed.

Attendance clinics trawls will also be held to facilitate discussion between the EWO and parents.

Attendance Officer will keep under review all pupils whose attendance fall below 90% and keep under consideration reasons given for the absence. If absence deteriorates to 80% in respect of any child this will be reviewed along with the Education Welfare Officer who will advise as to whether the school should consider no longer authorising absence.

If any child's attendance at the school reduces to 70% and the absence is unauthorised, the Education Welfare Office will automatically implement Targeted Casework Delivery. However, the EWO may engage with any referral whether the absence is authorised or not.

Long-term absence

Work will be provided for pupils who plan to be absent from school for a considerable period of time, for example, due to a length of time in hospital. The progress of pupils returning after long absence will be monitored and appropriate support provided. Where at all possible, a work recovery programme should be introduced to help catch up on missed work. Links between home and school will be kept open in times of long term illness.

Points to be considered:

A planned day of return to ensure that someone will be available should problems arise.

Encouragement of a positive attitude towards returnees, recognising that some students may be feeling very nervous about their return, especially long term absentees and previously excluded pupils.

Time for catching up on work missed.

A pre-return visit by the pupil in order to discuss practical matters.

Phased re-entry.

Promoting good attendance

At new parent meetings, in the school prospectus, in newsletters .

School assemblies.

Discussion with parents and pupils.

Printed information regarding attendance.

Support network where difficulties occur.

Attendance focus week.

Rewarding Good attendance and Punctuality

Children who obtain 100% attendance throughout the school year gain a certificate which is presented at an awards presentation.

The school aims for further pupil involvement in developing rewards to include:

Attendance and punctuality certificates awarded weekly in whole school assembly to the class who achieved the highest attendance/punctuality in the previous week.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will review on an annual basis, the effectiveness of attendance procedures. The designated member of staff (Attendance Co-ordinator), the Education Welfare Officer and the Education Welfare Team Manager will undertake the review.

The results of any review along with data collated in respect of attendance and absence will inform the decision making process and consider whether the policy is appropriate, efficient, effective and fair.

Success Criteria

Progress towards attendance targets.

Effective data analysis.

Improved attendance of individuals/target groups.

Increased awareness – pupils, parents/carers, staff.

Profile of attendance raised in school.

Written March 2017

To be reviewed March 2019