



School Attendance Policy

At St. Mark's C. E. Junior School, we believe that good attendance is not simply a legal requirement but essential. Through regular attendance, children can take full advantage of all that school offers and gain the educational and social skills necessary for life.

This policy is underpinned by the importance of attendance and punctuality, both in law and for the good education of all pupils. Namely:

- The Registrations Regulations 2006
- Education Act 1996

Why does school attendance and punctuality matter?

The whole school attendance target for 2022-23 is 96%.

Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance (including punctuality) and under-achievement.

Pupils with high attendance have been shown to:

- make better progress, both socially and academically,
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with,
- find learning more satisfying and settle into secondary school more easily.
- Establish positive learning habits that prepares children for life beyond school, whether this be further or higher education or this working life.

95%	=	47 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 8 days in total or 1 week and 3 days
90%	=	95 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 16 days in total or 3 weeks and 1 day
85%	=	142 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 24 days in total or 4 weeks and 4 days
80%	=	190 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 32 days in total or 6 weeks and 2 days

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

WHAT DO YOUR ATTENDANCE FIGURES ACTUALLY MEAN?

BE SMART BE THERE!

Percentages based on 190 academic days

Punctuality and lateness

- Children are expected to be in school on time. Doors open at 8:40am and the registers are submitted to the office by 8:50am.
- If a child arrives after 8:50am they must sign into the main school office. They will be recorded as **late**.
- If a child arrives after 9am they must sign into the main school office. This will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.
- If a child arrives late for school on a regular basis, learning really can suffer. This is for a number of reason but just on a time basis:

5 minutes every day	3 days
10 minutes every day	6.5 days
15 minutes every day	10 days
20 minutes every day	13 days
19 minutes every day	19 days

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

How do we promote and monitor attendance?



What to do if your child cannot attend school?

We expect parents to contact the school office by telephone **every day** that a child is away. There is a special line where you can leave messages about attendance and the messages will be picked up regularly.

Failure to provide a reason for absence **on each day** will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

It is always best to give honest reasons for why a child is not in school. If a child has a physical or mental health need and they are absent for reasons associated with this, it is best to explain this to staff. This can help the school to monitor patterns of illness and identify the support that the child and family may need to help them attend school regularly.

When can absence be authorised?

Heads may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Family holidays are not generally considered to be an exceptional circumstance. You must make any requests for leave of absence in advance and you must be the parent the child normally lives with. It is important to give the Head of school as much information as possible when applying for a leave of absence.

Unauthorised Absences

Please be aware that there is no entitlement to time off during term time. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Term-time holidays.
- Absence following or prior to a school closure or authorised leave (this will be coded as an unauthorised holiday until satisfactory medical evidence has been provided).
- Because it's a child's birthday
- Frequent unsubstantiated claims of illness
- Parent/carer's illness (**other than in an emergency**)
- School drop or collection times unsuitable to parents work or shift patterns.
- Other family commitments or leisure activities

Where there is no explanation for an absence **or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.**

Holidays

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. **Absence claimed for unexpected delays will require documentary evidence together with proof of original return dates.** For example where illness prevents travel, a doctor's certificates must be provided (these should be in English) and must be accompanied by a travel ticket with dates that would have indicated a timely return.

If a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term parents will be advised that their child's school place may be at risk.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents are to call the school to inform of any scheduled medical appointments.

Legal Framework

It is an offence under section 444 of the education act 1996. "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence." **If you take your child out of school without authorisation the school has the power to issue Fixed-Penalty Notices of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days and it should be noted that penalties may be issued to each parent for each child."**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent(s) is committing an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Parents who condone absence without good reason should recognise that this is an offence in law and may result in legal action.

There is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Please see the later section on exceptional circumstances.

Alternative Provision

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. This will be the expectation in Alternative Provision; however, timings of the day will be different to mainstream. In exceptional circumstances, a student can be placed on a temporary part-time timetable, for example, where a medical condition prevents full-time attendance. This would not be a long-term measure and it will be made clear when the part-time timetable ends. A personalised plan for intervention setting clear objectives linked to other relevant information or activities such as 'Education, Health and Care Plans' for children with SEN will be put in place and the absences from school as part of the part-time timetable will be treated as authorised.

Parental concerns

Please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Child Missing from Education

Where a student has been absent and the school has not been able to make contact to explain the absence within a 10 day period (5 days for a vulnerable student), the Missing Children Procedures will be actioned.

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/wiltshire/p_ch_missing_educ.html#Protection

Responsibilities and Procedures

The Local Governing Body sets Attendance Targets for the School Year and requires reports on levels of absence and Persistent Absence.

The Headteacher is responsible for achieving and maintaining high levels of attendance to meet Governor agreed targets and for ensuring sufficient resources are made available to do so.

The Class Teacher is responsible for making attendance a high priority in everyday school life and is expected to embrace all attendance initiatives. The Class Teacher will work with any student returning from short-term absence and will liaise with the Head of Year.

The Year Leader has a key role to play in supporting students' attendance and celebrating outstanding attendance. They will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that all school procedures relating to attendance and lateness are followed and recorded.
- Analysing attendance figures for the designated year group and using the analysis to work with the tutor team to drive and sustain improvement, ensuring that attendance levels do not affect academic progress.

The Inclusion Team will complete School Attendance Meetings (SAMS), which involves meeting with parents and their child to help and support in improving attendance. Acute cases are referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) on case-by-case basis.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations and will take the register as soon as possible at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session.

Working with Parents

Our school policy reflects our desire to help and support parents with attendance issues. If you feel your child has any attendance issues please speak to us either via your child's class teacher or through Norma, our Family Support Worker in the first instance. Parents can also see their child's attendance data using the Arbor App.

We fully understand that at times there are very clear reasons as to why a child cannot attend school which may not have been avoidable. Where this is the case, it is important that this is communicated with the school so that we can take this into account. If you feel there are any difficulties with attendance or punctuality, please contact us at school straight away – it is always better to address issues sooner rather than later.

Policy dated: November 2022

Policy review: November 2023

Appendix 1: FAQs around attendance

What are parents/carers responsible for?

- Making sure your child comes to school on time every day to enable them to receive their entitlement to learn, unless prevented by illness or medical appointment
- Letting the school know as soon as possible why a child is away
- Sending in a note for absence on return
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

Why is attendance so important?

- School attendance has a direct affect on a child's educational outcomes and is important for your child's future
- School attendance enables children to access all available opportunities and reach their full potential
- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve much less than those who attend regularly

When do we contact parents?

- We contact parents initially when attendance falls below 96%
- We ask parents to attend a School attendance meeting (SAM) when attendance falls below 90%
- We would reasonably expect attendance to be 96%+ unless there is an ongoing medical need

How many children achieve 95% – 100% attendance?

- A number of children in any class in any term will achieve 100 per cent attendance and nearly all children in that class will have been to school for over 95% of their time
- Only a few children attend less than 95% of their time

The school says that my child's average for the term is 90 per cent – should I be concerned?

- Yes, as this means your child is having on average a day off every other week
- This may be because they had the odd day here and there and then a few days off for an illness. Over the term it adds up
- Your child's attainment could be seriously affected by a low level of attendance and the school may contact you to discuss the matter

What could I do to help minimise my child's time off school?

- One of the best ways to help your child is to make all doctors', dentists', opticians' and other appointments for after school hours
- Make sure your child is never late for school (doors open at 8.40 am)
- You should contact your child's school to discuss this matter. Speak to the class teacher, Head of school or Parent Support Advisor

The school wasn't happy when I asked whether my child could take a little bit of time off for a family holiday. My child never has any other time off, why is this the case?

- If your child has a week off school they could lose up to 20 lessons of English and mathematics depending on how the school organises its lessons

- If you feel there are exceptional circumstances for a period of absence you have to get permission from the Head of school or the child will be marked as having unauthorised absence
- A family holiday may not be considered as exceptional unless there are other circumstance which mean it has to happen during the school term
- It is the Head of school who must decide whether the any circumstances are exceptional

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to you being taken to court by the local authority. If your child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the school will inform our Education Welfare Service who may issue a penalty notice for each child to each parent. Anyone who has day to day care of a child is considered a 'parent' and legally responsible for making sure the child attends school, this could be a step parent or a parent not living at the child's home address.

What is the cost?

- The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. The penalty is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days
- If you do not pay the fine within 28 days we have no option but to prosecute you in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £,1000 per parent per child

Enquiries and advice

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, you should first talk to your child's school. Alternatively, you can contact the Education Welfare Service on 01225 718230