



ST MARY'S CE ACADEMY

Attendance Policy
Autumn 2019 – Autumn 2022
Reviewed by Headteacher

Rationale

It is the right of every young person to receive full-time education. Young people who fail to attend school regularly cannot receive a coherent education as absence disturbs the continuity of the curriculum and also damages social relationships.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at St. Mary's and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success. We display a positive and pro-active ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality and values its partnership with parents / carers to promote good attendance. This policy advocates close working relationships with all involved to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance.

Aims

- To share the responsibility for promoting attendance amongst everyone at St. Mary's Academy;
- To develop and implement an effective attendance policy;
- Staff particularly strive;
 - i) To encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent
 - ii) To value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action;
- This attendance policy and its implementation should encourage pupils to attend school regularly by the implementation of specific measures e.g.:
 - i) Registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
 - ii) Setting attendance targets for individual pupils (where applicable) and the school;
 - iii) Contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised; monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality half termly;
 - iv) Regularly reporting attendance statistics to parents, Governors and the Local Authority, as appropriate.

Attendance and the Law

It is a legal obligation of all parents / carers to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full time education.

- The 1996 education Act states; "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable – (a) to his age, ability & aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

The legal framework for this policy is:

- Education Act 1996, section 444
- Anti-social behaviour Act 2003
- Access to Education for Children and Young people with Medical Needs.

Responsibilities

Parents

- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- To notify the Academy if their child cannot attend for any reason – this is for the child's safety as well as administrative reasons;
- To request authorisation for all 'leave of absence' including holidays and appointments in school time;
- To provide evidence of medical or other appointments in school hours;
- To work with the Academy to resolve / alleviate any attendance problems;
- To attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance.

St. Mary's Academy

- To contact parents / carers if a call is not received by 9.30am on the first day of absence;
- To monitor attendance and punctuality at least half termly;
- Submit details of the levels of absence through the termly School Census;
- Report attendance data to parents / carers and all other appropriate bodies such as the Governors and School Attendance Improvement Officer;
- Ensure staff are aware of issues affecting pupil attendance and to be pro-active in addressing issues;
- To reward good attendance (termly certificates issued in assemblies);
- Follow the procedures regarding attendance and absence, as outlined in this policy.

Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

- Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher. This includes absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill-health
- The Academy **may** authorise absence in the following circumstances:
 - i) Personal illness (excessive or extended absence will require medical evidence)
 - ii) Medical appointment (copy of appointment to be seen and copied)
 - iii) Family bereavement
 - iv) Religious observance
 - v) Involvement in a public performance

Unauthorised Absence

- Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Head Teacher. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.
- The Academy will not authorise absence in the following circumstances:
 - i) No explanation is offered by the parent / carer
 - ii) The explanation offered is unsatisfactory
 - iii) Leave of absence which are taken without prior consent
 - iv) Special occasions such as birthdays
 - v) Parent / carer or sibling illness
 - vi) Family holidays in term time

Holidays within Term Time

The Academy will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- Holidays in term time can only be agreed by the Head Teacher;
- The Academy is unable to authorise absence because of availability of cheap holidays or overlap with the beginning or end of term;
- Authorisation will not be considered during assessment time for Year 1 (Phonics Screening in June) and Year 2 (End of Key Stage 1 Assessments in May).

External Appointments within Academy Hours

The Academy recognises that there are occasions when pupils need to go out of school for an appointment (e.g. doctor, dentist, optician). If at all possible appointments should be made outside of Academy hours.

When a pupil leaves the Academy to attend an appointment during the school day, they must be signed out at the office and signed back in on their return.

We may request evidence of medical appointments.

Reporting Absence – First day Response

- On the first day of absence parents / carers are expected to contact the Academy, preferably by phone before 9.30am;
- The parent / carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return;
- If the Academy receives no contact a member of the office team will telephone the parent / carer.
- If contact cannot be made the office will attempt to contact others listed on the emergency contact form;
- If contact is still not possible a home visit may be made.
- If a child is still unwell after three days we request that the parent / carer update the school regarding the continued absence.

Monitoring Absence

Absences will be monitored at least half termly.

If a child's attendance falls below 95% parents will be sent a letter to inform them and the class teacher will discuss any issues that may arise.

If the attendance rate continues to deteriorate a further letter will be sent and a meeting will be arranged with the Head Teacher to discuss issues surrounding absence and steps to address these.

Persistent absentees are pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. At this point the Academy may involve the School Attendance Improvement Officer from the Local Authority. At this point legal proceedings could follow.