

ST MARY MAGDALENE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Agreed Whole School Policy

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



STATUS: DRAFT AGREED

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Filename: #SMMS Attendance

Signed Name Date

As a Church of England School, we recognise that each person is valuable, precious and **unique** before God. Our school is a community based on **trust, honesty** and **love**. We aim to live in **peace** with each other and to **forgive** those who have wronged us, as taught and demonstrated in the life of Jesus. We seek to foster in our members **wonder** in discovery, **thankfulness** for what we have, **compassion** for others and **hope** for the future. We therefore strive to ensure that our delivery of the curriculum meets the needs of each individual and helps foster an environment where the motivation for all to achieve and reach their full potential is at the core of our commitment.

St Mary Magdalene CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Vision Statement

Building on a foundation of Core Christian Values, we inspire and equip our children to acquire confidence, encouraging a thirst for lifelong learning.

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,' Philippians 4: 13.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attending school is a habit and it helps if children build the habit early into their school life starting from Reception class. Irregular attendance can be detrimental to the learning of the child and lead to an educational disadvantage thus affecting future career choices. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Poor attendance also results in loss of friendships for the children as relationships are constantly being formed. By not attending regularly gives the child the impression that school is not important and can strongly affect their attitude they have to learning and can result in anti-social behaviour.

Lateness disrupts the whole class and can be upsetting for children (late comers and peers).

AIMS

The Staff and Governors at St Mary Magdalene School are committed to providing a full and efficient education for all of our pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from education and from regular and punctual school attendance and good behaviour. To these ends, we will do all we can to ensure that all pupils attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Our school attendance target is 96% for 2018-2019.

THE EXPECTATIONS

For Pupils:

- to attend school every day;
- to arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the school day.

For Parents / Carers:

- to realise that, under the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act of 1989, they are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. Failure to secure regular attendance at school and comply with school attendance order is an offence;
- to ensure that their child attends school every day and on time;
- to ensure that their child arrives in school appropriately dressed and fully prepared for the school day and check that they have completed their homework

- to inform the school by 9:30am on the first day of absence, and any subsequent days, of the reason for their child's absence. This can be done by telephone, text or email, personal message to the school office or by a note sent through a sibling. **A covering note should also be provided once the child returns to school after an absence.**
- to provide the school with up-to-date home, work and emergency contact numbers as and when these change. This can be done by using the standard change of details form which is included in the half-termly newsletter and available from the school office. Parents are also sent out details of their contact information at least yearly for them to amend and return to the office;
- not to arrange family holidays to take place during the school term;
- to inform the Head Teacher in confidence about any problem that may affect their child's attendance or behaviour;
- ensure that arrangements are in place for their child to attend school when the parent or carer is unable to bring their child to school due to parental sickness or for any other emergency situation that may arise.

For the School:

- provide a good quality education;
- record their children's attendance regularly, accurately and efficiently;
- make every reasonable effort to contact the parent on the first day of absence when their child fails to attend school;
- deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent;
- be legally obliged in ensuring children's good attendance and behaviour;
- Instigate proper enquiries before removing the child from the school roll.

PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We will ensure good attendance by:

- teaching staff accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session;
- following-up absence on the first day
- undertaking weekly attendance checks and referring any concerns to the Headteacher;
- recording attendance on pupils' end of year reports;
- publicly rewarding 100% attendance and punctuality for individual pupils each term and over the course of the whole school year;
- giving parents attendance details at termly parent evenings;

- sending parents information on attendance once figures drop below 96% initially and then again if there is no improvement and attendance drops to 90% a meeting will be organised with the office Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership team

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil fails to attend school without a satisfactory explanation or evidence of an appointment with a doctor or hospital, we will follow procedures as set out in 'School Information – point (D) & (E)

* In exceptional circumstances, special planning will be required for any pupil who returns to the school after a lengthy absence. The Head Teacher will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme. All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process which requires extreme sensitivity and vigilance and that any problems should be notified to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. In collaboration with the parent and the link Education Welfare Officer (EWO), programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. This may involve the Inclusion Manager, as appropriate.

ORGANISATION

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils the importance of the education being provided. For this reason, it is essential that pupils see that staffs are arriving to lessons on time and well prepared. In addition, the following staff have specific responsibilities;

Head Teacher

- to oversee the whole policy with due regard to Safeguarding.
- to have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender, ethnicity and disability;
- to report to Governors.

Class Teachers

- to complete electronic registers accurately and on time;
- to inform the Head Teacher or the Office Manager of any concerns.

Office Manager

- to ensure that the electronic registers are saved by 9:05am each morning and by 1:15pm for Reception class, 1:30pm KS1 classes and 1:45pm for KS2 classes each afternoon.
- to check that attendance information has been entered correctly on the electronic attendance system on the MIS System.
- to follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting the parent / carer by 9:30am the same day of absence.
- to ensure the correct attendance codes are used as set down in the DfE Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities – January 2009. See Appendix A.
- to meet with the Head Teacher weekly to discuss any concerns and make arrangements with the parent or carer to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss ways to improve a pupil's attendance.

School Information

(A) Doors Open

School playground gates are opened at 8:30am. Children must remain with a responsible adult until the bell goes at 8:45am. Children remain the parent's or carer's responsibility until the bell goes and a

member of staff collects the child from the class lining up point. The playground gates will be closed at 8:50am.

(B) Registration

- Registers are called at 8:50am and at 1:05 pm for Reception, 1:20pm for KS1 and at 1:35pm for KS2. Registers close at 9:05am and at 1:15pm for Reception class, 1:30pm KS1 classes and 1.45pm for KS2 classes. Registers are marked consistently by staff.
- Any pupil arriving after 8:50am must report to the school office and will be marked as late (L). Any pupil arriving after the close of the register will be marked as U – unauthorised absence for the whole of the session.

(C) Lateness

Any pupil arriving after 8:50am must report to the school office where the time of arrival will be recorded and transferred to the computerised registration system by the school Office Manager.

If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed, this will be marked as an unauthorised late and will be regarded as an unauthorised lateness for the whole session. If there are exceptional circumstances, i.e., extremely bad weather, road closure, etc., which have had an impact on a number of children, the lateness will be authorised.

Those parents that arrive late with their children, will be asked for a reason for the lateness and informed of the importance of being in school on time.

(D) Absences

Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school by telephone, email, in person or by a note sent through a third party e.g. sibling. **A covering letter must also be provided by the Parent or Legal Guardian only and handed into the office on the child's return to school.** Pre-printed slips are available from the school office for this purpose.

All absence letters will be stored and kept until the child leaves this school.

Parents cannot authorise an absence. Only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence. This responsibility has been given to them by the School Governors.

Absence may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (although every effort must be made to make these appointments outside of school hours and in school holidays).
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Absence may also be authorised for:

- Music or other similar exams
- Moving home
- Parent or older sibling graduation.

Current and the previous year's attendance will be taken into consideration. If attendance is below 96% leave of this type will not be authorised.

Absence will not be authorised for the following or similar reasons:-

- Shopping (e.g. new shoes, etc)

- Birthdays
- Holiday taken during term time.
- Forgot the day that school re-started.

(E) Following up absences

- If the Office Manager has not received a reason for a child's absence by 9:30am on the day of absence the parent will be contacted by telephone. A voice message will be left if we have been unable to speak to a parent or carer and text message sent. If we have had no response by 9:30am the following morning a letter will be sent to the home address by first class post requesting an explanation for the absence. A second letter will be sent to the parent/carer if there has been no response and the unauthorised absence has exceeded 3 school days. Once the child has reached 3 days of unauthorised absence with no contact from the parent or carer the Local Authority will be notified.
- If there are any medical issues which means a child has a history of non-attendance a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting would be arranged with a view to a referral being made to the school nursing team with a view to developing a care plan to put strategies in place to ensure that a child with any medical needs can be in school as much as possible.
- Children's attendance will be closely monitored. If a child's attendance falls below 96% a letter will be sent to the parent or carer. If attendance continues to fall to or below 90% another letter will be sent to parents to arrange a meeting with the Office Manager to discuss strategies to improve attendance. If the attendance does not improve, a meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Head Teacher, followed by the Deputy and Headteacher for persistent attendance below 90%. Parents can request a copy of the referral. (Letters A, B, C attached)

REVIEW

This policy will be subject to review and evaluation after one full year of operation and thereafter subject to changes in local and national policy but at least every 2 years. The reviewing group will include the SMT, class teachers, governors and link EWO.

The review will give particular regard to the implications of the policy for equalities issues and the school's duty under S175, Education Act 2002, to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare.

APPENDIX A

ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES	Present or Absent
# - School closed to pupils	Present
/ - Present (AM)	Present
\ - Present (PM)	Present
B - Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Present
C - Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D - Dual Registered - At another educational establishment	Authorised Absence
E - Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F - Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G - Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
H - Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I - Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised Absence
J - Interview	Present
L - Late (before registers closed)	Authorised Late
M - Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N - No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O - Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence
P - Approved sporting activity	Present
R - Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S - Study leave	Authorised Absence
T - Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U - Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V - Educational visit or trip	Present
W - Work experience	Present

Letter A – 90-95% Attendance

<Formal_Title>
<Address_Line1>
<Address_Line2>
<Address_Line3>
<Post_Code>

Date

Dear <Formal_Title>

During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, it has come to our attention that <Pupil_Name>'s attendance has fallen this term to <attendance%>. The expected level of attendance for this school is 96%.

I am sure that you can appreciate that in order for children to learn effectively and to make progress in school it is essential that they attend regularly and on time. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

We appreciate that your child may have suffered ill health recently which has affected their level of attendance but we are confident that, with your support, an improvement will be made during the next term.

We will continue to monitor <Pupil_Name>'s attendance for the rest of this academic year. Should the attendance fall below 90% we will refer your child to the Southwark Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

Office Manager

Letter B – Under 90% Attendance

<Formal_Title>
<Address_Line1>
<Address_Line2>
<Address_Line3>
<Post_Code>

Date

Dear <Formal_Title>

During our recent register inspection it was noted that <Pupil_Name>'s attendance level has fallen this term to Percentage%. The expected level of attendance for this school is 96%. As your child's attendance is below 90% they are falling within the Governments '**Persistent Absentees**' category.

I am sure you can appreciate in order for children to learn effectively and to make good progress in school it is essential they attend regularly and on time.

We appreciate that your child may have suffered ill health recently which has affected their level of attendance but we are confident that, with your support, an improvement will be made. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

In the first instance I would like to make an appointment to meet with you on <Date> at <Time> to discuss the reasons for <Pupil_Name>'s absence, our concerns and see if there is any support we can offer such as a referral to the school nurse. We will continue to monitor <Pupil_Name>'s attendance over the next two weeks.

We are referring <Pupil_Name> to the Southwark Education Welfare Officer (EWO) today, who will also be in touch with you directly.

Yours sincerely

Office Manager

Letter C– Extended period under 90% Attendance

<Formal_Title>
<Address_Line1>
<Address_Line2>
<Address_Line3>
<Post_Code>

Date

Dear <Formal_Title>

Schools have been asked by the Government to monitor attendance of all pupils and in particular the attendance of pupils who miss 90% or more school sessions, regardless as to whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Those pupils with an attendance percentage of 90% or less are classified by the Government as '**Persistent Absentees**'. Pupils with persistent absences are unlikely to achieve their full potential.

Since our last meeting NAME attendance has not improved - an attendance level of below 90%- that means they are currently falling into the Government's 'Persistent Absentee' category.

I am sure you can appreciate, in order for children to learn effectively and make progress in school it is essential that they attend regularly and consistently. A child attending school for 90% of the time during the course of the academic year will have missed almost 4 weeks of the school year of teaching and learning which will have a huge impact on their progress in school. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

The Education Welfare Officer has already been informed of NAME's persistent absenteeism and will now be taking over the management of your child's attendance as this falls into the category of an offence.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Parris
Head Teacher

E - Permission slip to refer to the School Nursing Team

<Pupil_Name> <Pupil_LastName> - to be returned by <Date>

I give permission for my child to be referred to the school nurse due to his/her attendance falling to 85% or less due to ill health.

Please note that once you have agreed to meet with the school nurse she will contact you directly to make an appointment to meet with you in school.

Parent's name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Contact telephone number(s)

_____ Mobile

_____ Land line

_____ Work number

F – 1st day absence

«Formal_Title»

«Address_1»

«Address_2»

«Address_3»

«Address_5»

«Post_Code»

Date

Dear «Formal_Title»

Your child is recorded as being absent from school today and, to our knowledge, no contact has been with us regarding this absence. We have tried all available contact numbers that we have for «Known_As_First_Name» and have sent a text message to ask for an explanation as to their absence but we have yet to have a response.

Please note that the school’s absence policy (a copy of which all have parents have received) states that the expectation is that parents should contact the school by 9.30am with an explanation on each day of a child’s absence and a note must also be provided on the child’s return to school. Any medical appointments must be covered by a letter or appointment card from the hospital, GP, etc.

Please complete the slip below and return to school by <Date>. If we do not receive this information by this date the absence will remain unauthorised. I have also included an ‘Update contact details sheet’ for you to complete and return to the office.

«Known_As_First_Name» «Known_As_Last_Name» - Absence <Date>.

Please give a full detailed explanation of the absence here (please be specific, ie cough/cold/upset tummy, etc.) If these details are not provided this absence will remain unauthorised.

Parents Name(Capitals)

Signature.....

Date:-

G – Request for written explanation

«Formal_Title»

«Address_1»

«Address_2»

«Address_3»

«Address_4»

«Post_Code»

<Date>

Dear «Formal_Title»

Your child, «Known_As_First_Name», was absent from school during week commencing <Date>. Even though you have provided the reason for this absence by text, email or by a telephone message, all absences from school must also be covered by a written explanation.

Please complete the slip below and return to the school office by <return_date>. If we do not receive a written explanation by this date, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Reason for absence – W/C <Date>.

«Known_As_First_Name» «Known_As_Last_Name» was absent from school

on/from

.....(to).....
.....

because

.....
.....
.....
.....

Parent's Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

H - Request for holiday leave during term time

Before requesting leave during term time you must think about:

- The lessons your child will miss.
- The difficulty your child will have in catching up with work.
- The effect it will have on your child’s friendship groups.
- The effect it will have on how well your child performs in school.

For your information:

- Your child does not have the right to take leave during term time.
- Leave can only be granted if the request is made before the leave takes place and your child achieved at least 96% during the whole of the previous academic year and has 100% attendance at the time of this request.
- Leave will not be granted at certain times of the year, ie Year 2 & Year 6 SATS weeks.
- The School CAN refuse permission for your child to take leave during term time.
- The School cannot legally approve more than 10 days authorised leave in an academic year unless the Headteacher agrees that there are exceptional circumstances.
- If you remove your child without permission this may result in a referral to the Education Welfare and Attendance Service at the Local Authority, which may result in a fine or prosecution.
- The School will consider the following before authorising leave during term time:

- * The reason for the request.
 - * The duration of the leave.
 - * Your child’s attendance record.

Please complete and return to the School Office before you consider booking leave as permission may not be granted and the school cannot be liable for any cancellation costs.

Name (s) of child(ren) _____ Class _____

_____ Class _____

_____ Class _____

_____ Class _____

Date of proposed leave from _____ to _____ (no. of days) _____

Please provide detailed information on why the leave must be taken during term time (continue overleaf if necessary)

Parent/Carers Name _____ Signature _____

Please note; Leave is not authorised until signed confirmation is received from the Headteacher.

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Permission granted: YES / NO

Reason(s):

I – Reason for absence slip**St. Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School****Reason for Absence****Date:****My child (name)** _____**was absent from school from/on (date)** _____ **(to)** _____**because (if due to illness please give details)** _____

Parent's name _____ **Signed** _____**Please return to the school office once completed.****St. Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School****Reason for Absence****Date:****My child (name)** _____**was absent from school from/on (date)** _____ **(to)** _____**because(if due to illness please give details)** _____

Parent's name _____ **Signed** _____**Please return to the school office once completed.****St. Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School****Reason for Absence****Date:****My child (name)** _____**was absent from school from/on (date)** _____ **(to)** _____**because(if due to illness please give details)** _____

Parent's name _____ **Signed** _____**Please return to the school office once completed.**