



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy

We believe we conform with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 that govern the admissions and attendances registers that we must keep. We fully understand that an admission register must be kept by law and that the Governing body are responsible for making sure that the school keeps attendance registers that record which pupils are present at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions. The registers also will indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all of the children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Aims

- To comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. & The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.
- The school aims to have ALL children attending regularly and punctually and parents / carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Attendance & Children out of School Service, Cheshire East
- To ensure that Parents / Carer(s) are aware that Cheshire East Council in conjunction with schools are operating fixed penalty notices for non-attendance.
- In developing this Attendance policy, we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire East is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in the education development plans. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across the county. Schools are aware and take into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in

promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

- To understand the need for on-going communication with parents / carer(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to this school.

Procedure

Persons responsible for this policy and its implementation Role

- Headteacher – The overall implementation of the policy throughout school.
- Governing body – To ensure that the policy is applied accordingly.
- Class Teachers – To take registration twice daily and report immediately any concerns to the admin officer and/or Headteacher.
- Admin officer – To monitor attendance registers and support the Headteacher in administration of attendance issues.
- Attendance & Children out of School Service – To support the school in achieving its goals as set out by the Local Authority.
- Parents – To ensure that their child attends school in accordance with this policy and the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Admission Register

The admission register contains an alphabetical index of all the pupils in the school.

All entries will be entered onto the school's information management system SIMS by the School Admin officer.

The following will be recorded for each pupil:

- O Pupil's full name
- O Gender
- O Parent's name and address
- O The name of the person who has custody of the child
- O Emergency contact numbers of the parent/carers
- O Admission date
- O Name and address of the last school attended.
- Pupils will be entered on the admission register on the first day that we expect them to attend.

Attendance Registers

We believe that attendance registers are important for:

- Effective attendance management
- providing evidence in the event of prosecution of parents under the Education Act 1996.

- We have in place a computerised attendance register system (SIMS).
- Entries will be taken twice a day – morning & afternoon.
- All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised.
- If we have given approval for a pupil to be away then the absence will be recorded as authorised.
- The only time when a register will not be taken is when the school has had to close due to:
 - In-service training
 - Severe weather conditions
 - Structural damage
 - Fire.

Inspection of Admission and Attendance Registers

- The admission register and all attendance registers are available at all times for inspection by:
 - HM Inspectors;
 - Ofsted Inspectors;
 - Attendance & Children out of School Service

Publication of Admission and Attendance Information

Every year we publish the following information about attendance:

- The total number of pupils on the roll for at least one session;
- The percentage of sessions missed through authorised absence;
- The percentage of sessions missed through unauthorised absence.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Comply with this policy;
- Have good relations with the school;
- Ensure that their child attends school in accordance with the legal requirements;
- Ensure that their child is at school on time every day;
- Notify the school on any first day of absence stating the reason for absence;
- Keep the school updated with regular information if their child should be absent for a period of time;
- Send in a signed and dated note/letter or email to the admin officer at finance@stmrc.uk explaining the reason for their child's absence;

- Support good behaviour;
- Ensure their children understand and value the meaning of good behaviour;
- Support school rules and sanctions

Attendance and Registers Guidance & Procedures

Definitions:

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school followed by a written note to explain the absence. If a parent contacts the school via telephone, a follow up note is always required upon the child's return to school for proof of absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent wished to take a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence. The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise early collection after registration.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

An absence is recorded as unauthorised if the child is away from school and we have received no telephone contact from parent (carer) or no response from our first contact procedures, to give a reason why the child is off school.

If a child is absent

1. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian as part of its first response procedures.
2. When the child returns to school, an email or a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

3. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

4. If there are any serious doubts about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Lateness:

1. School begins at 8.30 am

All pupils are expected to be in school for registration before this time (the school gates open at 7.30 am.) Registers officially close at 8.50 am until the end of the spring term and from 8.40 am from the start of the summer term. Any child who arrives after the register has been taken but before registers are closed, is recorded as a late (L) in the register. Any child who arrives after registers close, is recorded as late after registers close on the Visitor System (Inventory System) and as an unauthorised (U – late after registers close) in the register. Pupils who are consistently late are not just disrupting their own education but also that of others.

2. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting will be held between the Headteacher and parents / carer(s). If improvements are not made, further action may be taken.

Requests for leave of absence – Including Holiday requests.

Children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a month in advance (whenever reasonably possible) to discuss the reasons why a leave of absence is required and if the special event will be approved. A leave of absence request form then needs to be completed by parents in any such instance. If a child is absent with no permission given from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be followed up with an investigation, led by the Headteacher or the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

No requests for any leave of absence will be authorised during any national statutory assessment period (usually during the month of May for Yr.2 & Yr.6 and during the start of June for Yr.1 & Yr.2 Phonics screening).

No requests for any leave of absence will be authorised for all other year group non-statutory assessment weeks.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, remove

references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Parents and carers are NOT ENTITLED to take their child away on holiday during term time. The amendments make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Only the Headteacher (or Assistant Headteacher in the Headteacher's absence) should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

For any leave of absence request, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form and provide a detailed written explanation for the exceptional circumstance in which they wish to take their child out of school. For any leave of absence, the Headteacher may request a meeting with parents/carers along with supporting evidence – such as letters from employers, to discuss the exceptional circumstances reasons in further detail. The Headteacher will consider all requests individually and will take into consideration the parents/carers reasons as well as:

- Child's current attendance record;
- Child's current attainment and progress in school.
- Whether the child is due to take any upcoming tests or exams;

The parents/carers will then be notified in writing whether their request for leave of absence has been approved or not. If the absence/holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any 2 consecutive half terms,
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in any 2 consecutive half terms. "Persistent" means at least 10 instances of late arrival

The Attendance & Children out of school service will respond to all school requests for fixed penalty notices within 10 school days of receipt, and where satisfied that all of the relevant criteria are met, will:

- Issue a warning to the parent of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued;
- Set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence,

and give the parent an opportunity to respond; this information can be included in the formal written warning letter, where one has been issued; and

- After due consideration of the facts of the case, only issue a Fixed Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period, if the required level of improved school attendance has not been achieved.

Where the Fixed Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a holiday related unauthorised absence, the formal warning letter and 15-day improvement period will not apply.

Penalties for unauthorised absence

Timeline:

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
TIMELINE	ONE CHILD	TWO CHILDREN
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent/guardian	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent/guardian	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear in the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure you child's regular attendance.	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance.

Long-term absence

For any long-term absence (longer than 5 school days) due to sickness or ill health, then the school will request to see evidence of medical treatment in the form of a prescribed medicine or a signed Doctor's note/letter.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact Parents to arrange a meeting to discuss absences. If necessary we will seek further advice and guidance from other outside agencies such as the Attendance & Children out of School Service or Health, to support any child who is likely to be away from school for an extended period.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who is absent from school or has an unauthorised absence after their return to school. If a child has a repeated number of

unauthorised absences, the parents or carer(s) will be asked to visit the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school can then contact the Local Authority Attendance & Children out of School to initiate possible legal proceedings

Please see appendix 1 in the good practice guide for attendance, for a flowchart of actions for poor attendance, showing step by step action for a child who has repeated unauthorised absences.

The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have between 95% and 100% attendance in any academic year, will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at a celebration assembly.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly update/report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The Headteacher and School Finance Officer, will monitor weekly attendance figures. Where attendance is of a concern, the school will write to parents outlining what those concerns are. The Headteacher and School Finance Officer, will monitor half-termly attendance figures for all pupils. Any child who has attendance below 90% will be examined in closer detail, to explore the reasons for the absence and what support can be offered to help it improve. The Headteacher will make contact with the parents / carer(s) of that child (via letter) to make them aware of their child's attendance percentage and to establish reasons for if their child has any unexplained unauthorised absence.

Their child's attendance will then be monitored over the following half-termly monitoring. If improvement is made, acknowledgement may be made (via letter) but the child will continue to be monitored until a time when attendance figures are consistently above 90%.

However, if a child's attendance does not improve after a period of monitoring, the parents / carer(s) will be invited into school for a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the issue

further and to put in place a plan of action / support to ensure that the child's attendance improves.

If attendance does not improve following the meeting between the Headteacher and parents / carer(s), then the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who will then actively become involved with the case. Parents / Carer(s) need to be aware that they can be prosecuted for their child's poor attendance at school.

Please see appendix 1, in the good practice guide for attendance, for flowchart of actions for poor attendance, showing step by step action for a child who has repeated unauthorised absences.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Frequently asked questions.

What can parents / carer(s) do to help?

Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.

Send in a note when your child returns to school.

Try to make appointments outside of school time.

Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

Talk to your child.

Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school.

Talk to the Education Welfare Officer.

You may contact the Attendance & Children out of School Service which can be accessed on the link below, who will work with you and the school to resolve a situation.

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

In Conclusion

We hope that this information will be useful to you and that students, parents/carers and the school can work together to bring student's attendance as near to 100% as possible. If you would like to ask about anything in this policy, please feel free to contact the School Business Manager at admin@stmrc.uk