

# St. Mary's Primary School



## Attendance Policy

2017

# **The Management of Attendance**

## **Statement of Principle**

All members of the school community of St Mary's Primary School are fully committed to the principle that good attendance is an important part of school life. It is further acknowledged that it is the duty of the school to promote an environment in which attendance is nurtured and in which positive steps are taken to promote the emotional and physical well being of every pupil in its care.

## **Aims and Objectives**

St Mary's Primary School aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school.

In order to promote good attendance, behaviour and discipline, we aim to:

- provide a welcoming environment, which promotes respect for others;
- provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment and a stimulating and accessible curriculum;
- provide opportunities for the good behaviour of children to be praised, as set out in the school's 'Positive Behaviour and Discipline policy';
- provide opportunities to celebrate pupils' success and achievements.

## **Responsibilities of Parents**

*"To ensure that children have an efficient education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs"*

Education and Libraries Order 1986

Parents are asked to phone the school on the first day of absence and inform the school the reason for absence and expected length of absence. Please confirm this with a written note when your child returns to school.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but this is delegated to on a day-to-day basis to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice.

- The Board of Governors is fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy.
- The Principal reports to the Board of Governors about attendance issues on a regular basis.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal**

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the Principal. The Principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues and ensuring statistical information is provided as required by government.

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance. The principal will meet with the education welfare officer half termly to discuss pupil attendance issues

The Principal will:

- liaise with the education welfare service about individual pupils;
- talk to pupils with irregular attendance;
- send letter to parents of pupils who are absent from school on a regular basis without explanation;
- make a referral to the Education Welfare Service if improvement in attendance is not made;
- collate and report attendance information;
- take responsibility for overall monitoring of attendance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Class Teacher**

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher. In St Mary's Primary School the class teacher is responsible for:

- Developing trusting relationships with all pupils;
- Monitoring attendance, e.g. marking register, collecting absence notes and identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns;
- Following up pupil absence if notes not produced;
- Talking to individual pupils about their attendance;
- Promoting class attendance through the curriculum;
- Referring pupils to the principal;
- Liaising with the education welfare officer;
- Providing support to pupils after a long absence from school.

## **Roles and Responsibility of Office Staff**

Office staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are some of the roles they may undertake:

- Operating the SIMS system;
- Taking phone messages from parents when pupils are absent;
- Maintaining the late register;
- Compiling lists of absentees;
- Collating registration data.

## **The Recording of Attendance**

The Department of Education has issued guidelines about categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised (Circular 1995/19 and 2006/14). As a result the following codes will be used to record absence.

- / \ Present
- L Late
- U Late after registration
- C Suspended
- E Educated off site
- I Illness only
- N No reason yet recorded
- M Authorised absence
- \* Not on roll
- R Religious observation
- O Exceptional circumstances
- B Bereavement
- H Other Absence
- P Approved Sports
- E Educational Visit
- Y Enforced Closure
- F Family Holiday (Agreed)
- G Family Holiday (Not Agreed)
- T Traveller Absence

To ensure the school's Attendance Policy operates in an appropriate manner, the Board of Governors has delegated authority to the principal who has the authority to decide whether an absence should be classified as authorised / unauthorised.

## **AUTHORISED ABSENCES**

*In normal circumstances the following types of absences will be classified as authorised:*

- Illness (when note is provided by parent)
- hospital / dental appointments ( when prior notice is given )
- family bereavement
- representing the school / county / country at an approved event
- taking music / dance/ drama examinations
- religious holidays ( when prior notification of absence is given )

In special circumstances parents may apply for a leave of absence for their child. The authorisation of the absence is at the principal's discretion and must be requested in writing, prior to the absence. In exceptional circumstances, when a written request is impractical, parents should contact the principal, in person, to discuss the matter in confidence.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

In normal circumstances the following types of absence will be classified as unauthorised:

- birthday
- on a shopping trip with parents
- staying at home with ill parent or sibling
- term time holiday

When a pupil is absent on a regular basis, a letter will be sent to the parents to highlight the school's concerns. This letter will detail the attendance percentage and the number of days of absence. Please see (Appendix A) for sample of the letter.

## **Lateness**

In St Mary's Primary school lateness is strongly discouraged. Pupils are expected to be in their line when the bell rings at 9.00am. The teacher will mark the class register on arriving to his/her classroom/ Pupils arriving after 9.00am will be recorded as being late. and return it to the school office at 9.10am. If a pupil arrives after registration has closed (9.15am) the pupil must go to the office directly, where the secretary will mark him/her 'U' on the register, unless a valid reason is provided e.g. SEN Taxi.

The Principal will review the late marks on a termly basis:

- When a child is late on a regular basis, the Principal will contact the parents to discuss the matter.
- Whenever it is deemed appropriate a parent / school contract will be drawn up. Please see (Appendix B) for sample of the contract.