



Together we love to learn  
and learn to love

# St. Mary's CE Infant School

## Attendance Policy

St Mary's CE Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish. We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

*"Do everything in love"*

1 Corinthians 16:14



St Mary's CE Infant School offers an environment in which pupils and families feel valued and welcome and where they know that their presence is essential. Our Christian vision emphasises our dedication towards the flourishing of every individual and, as a school, we believe that this is achieved through, an understanding of the importance and a commitment to, regular school attendance.

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend school regularly. The law states that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of School for the purpose of a term time holiday. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that children make the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them and can achieve their potential.

## Principles

- The importance of school attendance is emphasised at parents' meetings and to parents/carers prior to their child starting school.
- A pupil's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.
- Parents/carers are promptly informed over concerns about attendance and given the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff.
- Attendance is discussed with parents/carers if there is a level of concern or pattern of absence.
- Parents/carers of pupils who do experience attendance difficulties are offered support in line with our vision.

## Expectations

School expects parents/carers to:

- ensure that their children attend school every day;
- contact school by telephone or by email on the morning of the first day of any absence;
- ensure their children arrive in school on time and well prepared for the school day;
- contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school;
- report to the office and complete the 'Signing Out Book' if their child needs to be taken out of school or arrives in school, for any reason, at any time other than at the start and end of the normal school day;
- to only take their child out of school for occasional days or parts of days, when there are exceptional circumstances;
- to complete the schools 'Request for Leave of Absence' form and return it to the school office at least fourteen days prior to the date/s requested for consideration.

Parents/carers and pupils should expect the following from school:

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend without providing good reason;
- immediate action on any problem notified to the school;
- referral of specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.

## Registration

- The school day starts at 8.40am when the school door is opened;
- Registers will be taken each day at 9.00am and 1.00 pm;
- If a pupil arrives after the registers close at 9.05am, the parent/carer should report to the school office and the child is registered as late;
- If children arrive after 9.15 am, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless the headteacher deems that there are exceptional circumstances.



The School adheres to the Attendance Team guidelines regarding persistent lateness and may therefore implement parenting contracts to enable the school to work with families to support attendance and punctuality. If parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues and there is no improvement, a Penalty Notice could be issued.

## Authorised Absences

Absence will be authorised for:

- Sickness. Parents/carers should telephone or email the school to advise them that their child will be staying at home. The school will ask about the nature of the illness and the expected duration of absence from school;
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments. Whenever possible, medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours. If a child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents must inform the school in advance;
- Days of religious observance. These days must be exclusively set apart for religious observance and be set apart by the parents'/carers religious body (not the parents/carers);
- Exceptional family circumstances.

## Unauthorised Absences

Absences will not be authorised for the following:

- Unexplained absence;
- Absence for a shopping trip;
- A trip or holiday;
- Any absence that is not considered by the Headteacher to be as the result of exceptional circumstances;
- Arriving at school after 9.15 am.

## Response to non-attendance

If there are concerns about a child's absence, whether this absence is authorised or not, parents/carers will be contacted by the school to discuss the absences with the Head Teacher.

If a pupil is persistently absent or repeatedly late and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the County's Attendance Team. Consultation between the school and the Attendance Team will be arranged to set targets for, and to support, poor attendees. Other services such as the Early Intervention Hub may also be involved in the support arrangements.

In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between school and parents, with the support of the Attendance Officer, the school will refer the matter formally to Oxfordshire County Council. Where necessary, Penalty Notices may be issued in line with Oxfordshire County Council's Code of Conduct (January 2015).

## Children Missing Education

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, Attendance Team. *[This is a legal requirement]*. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

## Legal proceedings

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement, and essential for pupils in order to maximise their educational opportunities. The Education Act 1996, Section 444A and 444B, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003,



Section 23, Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 gives powers for a range of procedures to be initiated if parents/carers fail to secure a child's attendance at school.

## Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness

The Governing Body will analyse attendance data throughout the year to identify issues and trends and will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance % against that of previous years and against national benchmarking

## APPENDIX

Parents wishing to request absence must complete and return the school's 'Request for Leave of Absence' form at least 14 days in advance of the requested absence, stating the period of absence being requested and the exceptional circumstances to be considered.



The Governor Attendance committee will make a decision and inform the parents as to whether the reasons given are deemed to be exceptional circumstances and the absence authorised or not.

### **Request is not approved**

If parents decide to remove their child from the school even though their request was declined, this will count as unauthorised absence and may prompt a visit from The Attendance and Engagement Officer. A penalty notice of up to £120 may be incurred.