

ATTENDANCE POLICY

St. Mark's C.E. Junior School aims to provide every child with the opportunity to learn and grow in a welcoming and secure environment where Christian values, principles and beliefs are strongly fostered together with high standards of work and behaviour. 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 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. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Aims

It is the aim of this policy that children should attend school consistently to ensure their educational progress and their physical, spiritual and social development. We aim to monitor attendance, and the procedures which are in place, in order to achieve high levels of attendance. The Home-School Agreement invites parents and children to commit themselves to the same expectations.

Practice

Class registers are called at the very beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Children are marked as 'Present' or 'Absent' on Pupil Registration Forms which are then scanned electronically at the end of each week. There is a list of approved codes for categories of absence or lateness. The office staff keep a record book for messages about absent children and there is another record sheet for children to be signed in/out during the day if that is necessary. Parents are requested to inform the school by telephone on the first day of any absence due to illness. Parents who wish their children to be absent from school for reasons other than illness and medical appointments must complete a request form which goes to the Headteacher for approval. Teachers will mark reasons for absence, if known, on the reverse of the Pupils Registration Form. Any omissions will be completed by the Admin Officer. A mark must be made during registration, not simply left blank.

Monitoring

The class teacher will draw the attention of the Headteacher to any unexplained absence of children about whom there may be a concern. The office staff check daily the number of children absent and if no reason has been received they will contact the parents. The Headteacher will monitor the registers to check on individual attendance. If there is a repeated pattern of unauthorised absence or lateness the Headteacher will contact the parents. If this does not lead to satisfactory attendance the Education Welfare Officer will be informed. The EWO checks the school registers on a regular basis.

Authorised absence

Parents are encouraged not to take their children out of school during term time and are specifically requested to avoid the main school summative assessment period. In the case of Y6 SATs (National Curriculum Tests in May) the Headteacher cannot authorise absence for holiday. Authorised absence is given by the Headteacher (or by the Deputy Headteacher in their absence), providing parents are able to provide an acceptable reason e.g. if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent

If a child is absent

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 by telephone or text message as soon as possible. When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment. If there is any doubt 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.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that 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 to attend, e.g. a special event, funeral, restricted parental leave etc. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance in writing (using a holiday request form), but normally this request will be granted. Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents and carers to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, the school will endeavour to grant the leave of absence.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services (e.g. EWO), so that alternative arrangements can be made for the child e.g. some tuition outside school, investigation

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year (November with the School Improvement Partner). These are agreed by the senior staff (School Leadership Team) and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Headteacher will report on absence breakdowns in termly Headteacher Reports. 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 school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. 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.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year.

Date of policy:

Date policy last reviewed: June 2009

Date of next review: May 2011

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors)