



*'Loving to Learn, Learning to Love'*



## **Attendance Policy**

**Last Approved:** January 2024

**Review Date:** September 2024

## **Objectives**

- To acknowledge the impact of non-school attendance on individual pupil's levels of achievement.
- To acknowledge that non-attendance and patterns of poor attendance rather than unauthorised absence is the key issue.
- To establish the importance of punctuality in attending both school and lessons.
- To bring about positive change to existing trends and statistics.
- To ensure all stakeholders work to support and promote the importance of children attending school regularly.
- To inform and support families working to improve their children's attendance.
- To encourage parental responsibility through providing efficient ways in which parents can implement their responsibility for their child's attendance record.

## **Policy and Procedures.**

We recognise that it is important that all schools follow the same procedure to ensure that the statutory duties are carried out by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), which supports appropriate action being taken when parents/carers fail to ensure good school attendance.

To further support the Attendance Policy, we: -

- Have clear registration procedures to encourage positive attitudes toward attendance and punctuality and to identify pupils at risk of meeting attendance targets.
- Work with parents/carers to support any of our families with any difficulties that may impact upon their child's attendance by enlisting partner agency support where appropriate, for example Education Welfare Officer, School Nurse.
- Support learning and positive attitudes to behaviour by investigating the barriers to good attendance through attendance clinics.
- Have developed supportive systems of sanctions and rewards.
- Undertake analysis of patterns of absence via regular register checks and termly attendance reports, which are reported to the Federation Board of Governors.
- Ask the parent/carer to ensure that up to date contact telephone numbers and any change of address is forwarded to the school office.
- Share common strategies and language to reinforce the attendance policy in respect of key areas of concern, such as:

## **Authorised and non-authorised attendance:**

- We clearly differentiate between authorised and non-authorised attendance.
- We authorise absence only when the reason (illness, bereavement, and religious observation) can be seen as a genuine explanation of the absence.
- Evidence is required for any medical appointments, for example hospital or dentist.
- If a child returns to school during the session from the appointment, they will be given the mark for the session.

## **Persistent Absenteeism**

- Following DfE guidelines, the Persistent Absentee (PA) rate is attendance which is below 90%.
- If a pupil's attendance drops to 90% and below, parents/carers will receive notification. Further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence. Medical evidence is any medicine or prescription with the child's name and date on, or a note from the doctor or hospital.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers. We aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 96%. If a child's attendance drops below 96% the school may contact parents/ carers to discuss why and to agree strategies to raise attendance to above 96%.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Parents/carers of children who are not yet of compulsory school age attend school are strongly encouraged to ensure their child attends school regularly in order to establish good habits of attendance and punctuality for later years.

The school and the Local Authority work together to ensure that parent/carers meet their responsibility. Attendance issues are dealt with in the first instance by the school. If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, it is followed by referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who can provide an important link between school and families but who can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

## **Punctuality**

The school gates open to pupils at 8:30am. Registration for all pupils is 8:40am. The gates are locked promptly at 8:45am; any child arriving after this time must come to the school office to be recorded as late.

The school keeps records of all late arrivals, with names of late arrivals being entered into the "late book" which is kept in the School Office. Late arrivals are monitored weekly.

Our Home School Links Worker conducts daily punctuality / late gates. If a child is consistently late, parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss punctuality with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and/or the Educational Welfare Officer. If no improvement occurs, an official referral to the Education Welfare Officer is made and parent/carers may receive penalty notices / fines.

The end of the school day is 2:45pm. Late collections are monitored weekly. If a child is consistently collected late, parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss punctuality with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher. If school are unable to make contact with a parent/carer by 4pm, either through telephone or through a door knock, then Social Services may be contacted for advice and support.

## **Recording Absence and Punctuality**

Every half term the school is required to submit details of Persistent Absence to the Educational Welfare Officer. We are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence. Children are classed as Persistent Absentees if their attendance is below 90%. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

## **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

Taking a leave of absence during term time will affect your child the same as other absences. As a school we expect parents to support their child's education by not taking out of school during term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law for leave of absence in term time to go on holiday. Unauthorised absences will be referred to Education Welfare and fines will be issued following these referrals as per Stoke on Trent Local Authority Guidance.

### **To request a leave of absence**

Parents must request a leave of absence 4 weeks before the planned leave. A request form is available from the school office.

A meeting will be arranged with Family Support/ Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reason and length of the absence. During the discussion parents will be informed of the possible outcomes and the process of referrals.

The request will then be placed with the Headteacher, where they have absolute discretion regarding the authorisation or authorisation of the absence.

The Home School Link Worker will inform the parents of the outcome of the request by letter and/or telephone.

Leave in term time is not authorised and will be marked as a 'G' code on the register, this will then be referred in to Education Welfare and a penalty notice will be issued.

If there is no permission requested, a letter will be sent to the parents asking for a reason of the absence stating if there is no contact made an automatic referral to Education Welfare will be sent. If there is contact, a decision will be made by the Headteacher and the parent will be informed.

If your child is absent for a period of 20 consecutive days, they will be taken off role after the registers close on the 20<sup>th</sup> day and their position in school would need to be reapplied for.

Following the safeguarding procedures within school, this will be reported to the Local Authority as set out in the Stoke-on-Trent Council Promoting Regular School Attendance – Children Missing Education (CME) guidance.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

In the first instance, where attendance is below 96%, a letter of concern will be sent to the parents/carers. If the absence continues to fall or drops below 90%, a second letter of concern will be sent and a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and the Home School Link Worker will be arranged, during this meeting extra support and an agreed joint approach for pupils and families will be put into place.

If the issues have not been resolved and attendance continues to fall a Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued and may result in a referral to Education Welfare for statutory action.

#### **Level 3**

Upon receipt of the referral to Education Welfare, the case will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer for statutory action. Attendance will be monitored weekly, as outlined in the policy, medical evidence and contact with the school will be scrutinised by the Education Welfare Officer.

Home visits, telephone call and letters will be actioned. If attendance continues to be unauthorised a penalty notice fine will be issued. The parent/carer has 21 days to pay (£60 per parent, per child), if the fine is not paid after 21 days the fine will double to £120 per parent, per child unless not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the matter will proceed to court.

Non-payment of a penalty notice issued in response to leave in term time will proceed for prosecution to the magistrate's court.

#### **Level 4**

The matter would move to level 4 if parents/carers have previous convictions for non-school attendance. A penalty notice warning letter and the final warning letter are then issued. An attendance review meeting is held with the Education Welfare Officer, the EWO manager, the Head of School and parents/carers. The case will proceed to court; this then carries a heavier fine and possible custodial sentence. If a parent/carer is found guilty in any cases that proceeds to court, level 3 and 4, it results in a criminal conviction.

### **Children absent from Education (CAE)**

This is defined as children who are persistently absent from school (absent repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods). The school works hard to try and prevent persistently absent pupils from becoming a child missing in education in the future.

### **Children missing in Education (CME)**

This policy has been written in accordance to the guidance set out in the Stoke-on-Trent Council Promoting Regular School Attendance – Children Missing Education (CME) which can be found here:

[Children-Missing-Education-Policy Stoke-on-Trent Jan-2019.pdf \(westonfederation.co.uk\)](#)

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a Child Missing in Education (CME) procedure as set down by The Local Authority's Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family.

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The Registration Process.**

1. Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate class attendance register, although other adults may complete the register under the teacher's direction (e.g., Teaching Assistants).
2. Registers must be completed in blue or black ink (absence in red). Data from registers will be transferred to the school's information management system (SIMS) on a daily basis by clerical staff.
3. The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and beginning of the afternoon. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Absences will only be authorised by the school when a satisfactory explanation has been given by parents (e.g., illness). Explanation must be in person, or by telephone message on the first day of absence.
4. Correct codes for recording attendance and absence are set out in each register. Only the Home School Links Worker enters these codes.
5. Morning (am) is counted as one session and afternoon (pm) is counted as another session. Pupil attendance at school is 2 sessions per day.

### **Timetable of Registration.**

<b>Reception</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>
8:40am Morning Registration 12.30pm Reception Afternoon Registration	8:40am Morning Registration 12.30pm Afternoon Registration	8:40am Morning Registration 12:50pm Y3 Afternoon Registration 1:10pm Upper Key Stage 2 Afternoon Registration

Our Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have the responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting concerns through regular review meetings with the Home/School Link Worker and Education

Welfare Officer. If there is marked improvement in attendance, then a letter of improvement is sent to parents.

### **Rewards**

Children who have 100% attendance and no lates have their names put into a draw to win a £10 voucher and a certificate each half term.

Children who have 100% attendance and no lates for the whole academic year receive an end of year treat and their names are put into a draw to win a £50 voucher.

The attendance of each class is displayed on our attendance monitor in the hall each week, to encourage competition. The class with the highest attendance receives a trophy to keep for the week.

Any class with 100% attendance for a week receives a £5 book voucher and get to wear their own clothes in school the following Monday.

Any class over 96% attendance will get fifteen minutes extra time during the week to do as they should choose e.g., extra play time, use of the trim trail or using computers.

### **Action to implement and support this policy**

St Mark's CE Primary School will therefore:

- Ensure a common approach and language to ensure clarity and understanding for all stakeholders.
- Ensure that attendance is a regular feature on newsletters to parents and that the attendance policy is displayed on the school's website.
- Ensure attendance is the responsibility of the Head of School with support from the Home School Links Worker and Education Welfare Officer. The Head of School will ensure that there is adequate record keeping within our school to ensure accurate and consistent identification of vulnerable children and families.
- Emphasise the importance of regular and sustained attendance by an early and consistent response to non-attendance and not authorising absence unless it clearly meets the statutory criteria.
- Clearly enforce responses to late arrival.
- Establish appropriate priorities for action i.e., when making first-day contact, target vulnerable children first, then children being monitored by the school and the Education Welfare Officer, then other pupils as necessary, taking account of individual needs.
- Use all contact with parents to clarify and reinforce their responsibility to have their child in school and to contact the school when there is a genuine reason for non-attendance.
- Confirm the reason for refusing to authorise non-attendance/ leave in exceptional circumstances in writing to parents, warning them that if they take the child out of school without authorization for a period of 20 school days or longer, the child will be taken off roll and the parent/carer will have to reapply for their place on their return, should a place still be available.
- Use a system of rewards that recognise "improving" attendance in addition to recognition of good attendance, including sending letters to parents/ carers if their child's attendance is improving.
- Use of attendance colour code system. (please see following pages)
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of this policy annually.

## SUMMARY

- We recognise that regular attendance is crucial to pupils achieving their potential.
- Our key concern is non-attendance, rather than whether attendance is authorised or not.
- Our most effective response will be achieved by a common policy supported by a common language.
- Our reason for developing an attendance policy is to enable us to clarify and reinforce parents'/carers' responsibility to have their child(ren) attend school regularly, or to inform the school when there is a genuine reason for non-attendance.
- This aim will be best achieved by working in partnership with parents and carers to maximise their children's attendance.
- The impact of the policy to be evaluated through half-termly attendance reports and an annual review of attendance and the attendance policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Signed**.....

D. Sadler  
Headteacher

**Signed:** .....

Co-Chair Local Governing Board

**Date:** .....

**Review date:** September 2024