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Marlborough St Mary's CE VC Primary School



MARLBOROUGH
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PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

Rationale

Marlborough St. Mary's School promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. We feel that the whole school community takes responsibility for attendance. For this reason the Attendance Policy has been discussed by Governors, all Staff, Parents/Carers and the Education Welfare Officer. The policy has been drawn up in conjunction with St. Peter's and St. John's Schools to ensure consistency throughout the key stages.

Aims

To raise attendance

To improve punctuality

To raise levels of attainment and achievement

To maximise opportunities both in school and in later life

To encourage an attitude, from parents/carers and pupils, of wanting to be at school to learn

Expectations

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- that they attend school regularly
- that they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- that they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- to ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend
- to ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework
- to contact the school in confidence whenever any problems occurs that may affect their child's performance in school

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

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason
- immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us (Educational professionals have a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of children)
- recognition and reward for good attendance
- a quality education
- if a family is struggling with their child's attendance they can refer themselves to and be supported by the school's Parent Support Advisor (PSA)

Guidelines

Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person if their child needs to be absent from school and to advise the reason as soon as possible. The school will record this message in the absence diary and give the absence the code relevant to the category of absence, whether authorised or unauthorised in the class register.

Authorised Absences

Medical and dentist appointments should be arranged outside the school day if possible. Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day. Funerals can be authorised in most cases, as can Religious Observance. Sickness is also classed as an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absences include

Shopping, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parents/carers unwell, brothers and sisters attending appointments or being unwell, unable to find school uniform, birthdays.

Holidays

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/carers from taking holidays in term time; therefore all holidays will be unauthorised. However, there may be a few circumstances and reasons which fall into an acceptable category and these are clearly stated in our letter regarding the Wiltshire Council code of conduct for the taking of holidays in term time.

All holiday requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher on the official form prior to the holiday being taken.

No holiday requests will be granted during the weeks in May when SATs take place for Years 2 and 6. Notification of the dates will be given to parents/carers as early as possible in the academic year.

Response to Absence

The school operates a first day contact system regarding unexplained or unexpected absence. If the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the Admin Officer or the Pastoral Support Teaching Assistant (PSTA) will contact the parent/carer during that school day.

The school will notify the social care locality team if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.

If the parent/carer notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a week then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a telephone call from the Admin Office or PSTA.

If the child continues to be absent, then details will be passed to the Headteacher by the Admin Officer in the form of 'Register of absent Children' for that week by Friday midday. The Headteacher will write to the parent/carer and ask for a Doctor's medical note and consider a referral to the Education Welfare Officer or the School Nurse. The Class Teacher will be kept informed of this process.

If an absence is unexplained, the Headteacher will write to or telephone parents/carers for an explanation. If no reason is forthcoming, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Parent Support Advisor will be asked to try and make contact. The class teacher remains responsible for the welfare of pupils in their class and will liaise closely with the PSTA or Headteacher to work towards following up attendance issues.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

In the unusual case of a persistent attendance problem, the Headteacher will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting.

Parents are informed of school policy - by letter – when attendance percentage drops below 90% with no obvious reasons, e.g. holidays/medical, and advised of next steps and County/EWO referral.

Unauthorised Absence

Marlborough St. Mary's follows County Guidelines on issuing Penalty Notices for persistent unauthorised absences. A copy of the Wiltshire Council Penalty Notices leaflet is attached to Holiday Request forms to remind parents/carers of this. A letter is sent to parents/carers advising them that they are likely to receive a fine for taking unauthorised absence.

Lateness

Pupils are encouraged to be in school between 8.45 and 8.55 a.m. to give them time to settle into the planned early morning tasks for a 9.00 a.m. start. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 9.00 a.m. All children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will need to report to the office and sign in. The registers are taken to the office just after 9.00 a.m. and are closed at 9.25 a.m. After this time a late arrival is officially absent for the morning session.

In the afternoon, registers are open from 1.00 p.m. to 1.10 p.m.

Pupils are encouraged to be in school by 8.45am.

Junior school starts at 8.55am and Infant School at 9.05 at which time the gates are shut.

Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after the gates close.

All children arriving after the gates close must report to the office and sign in.

The registers are taken electronically in the Junior Department and are closed at 9.25am. In the Infant Departments registers close at 9.35. After these times a late arrival is officially absent for the morning session.

In the afternoon, registers are open from 1.30pm until 1.40pm in the Junior Department and 1.00 until 1.20 in the Infant Department.

Lateness is monitored monthly by the PSTA and Headteacher who will discuss problems initially with the pupils concerned, the class teacher and parents. Where children have persistent lateness problems the Headteacher will invite the parents/carers into school to a formal meeting.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year parents/carers will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through information.

The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance.

Rewards

Termly awards will be made:

- Winter Term with 99% attendance will receive a bronze certificate
- Winter and Spring terms with 99% attendance will receive a silver certificate and a prize
- Winter, spring and Summer terms with 99% attendance will receive a gold certificate

Procedures

- The Register Monitors collect the register from the office morning and afternoon. Register monitors should receive information that should the fire alarm go off when collecting registers, they should go straight to the assembly point to join their class.
- Class teacher sends the register with the register monitors to the office by 9.05 a.m.
- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by the Admin Officer twice a day.
- Log kept of all children who arrive late or leave before the end of the school day in Absence Diary.
- Log kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been received and of phone calls made to parents/carers.
- Weekly absence data to be monitored by the Headteacher.

Procedures

- Class teachers complete registers. Any children arriving after the gates close **must** report to the school office to ensure that their attendance is recorded.
- Registers of all classes are monitored by the office staff daily.
- Log kept of all children who arrive late.
- Log kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been received and of phone calls made to parents/carers.
- Termly meeting between PSTA and Admin Officer to discuss attendance and implement interventions. A report is given to the Headteacher stating actions that are being undertaken.

Systems

Lateness and Attendance Figures

These will be scrutinised on a termly basis

- In response to repeated episodes of lateness, a letter will be sent to parents/carers by the school with the aim of addressing the situation. If the situation does not improve, the parents/carers will be invited to a formal meeting with the Headteacher

- any child with an attendance of under 85% will have their records examined and drawn to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Children with attendance between 85% and 90% will have their reasons for absence monitored

Attendance figures to be analysed monthly by class, year group and whole school. These figures are to be given to the Pupil and Curriculum Committee. The school will meet regularly with the EWO to discuss figures. All practices will be reviewed regularly.

Attendance of less than 90% will be classified as persistent absence.

Attendance is reported on in the Headteacher's report to governors. The school will meet with the EWO as required to discuss figures. All practices will be reviewed regularly.

Interventions

A range of intervention strategies will be discussed at meetings with the Headteacher and Parent Support Advisor. These include:

- * educating parents on the importance of children attending school regularly

Interventions

A range of intervention strategies will be discussed at meetings with the Headteacher, PSTA and the PSAs. These include:

- Educating older pupils to get to school safely by themselves.
- Incentive schemes.
- PSTA created interventions.
- EWO initiatives.
- Walking bus option when appropriate.

If attendance does not improve, the EWO will progress legal routes to ensure parents/carers comply with attendance legislation.