

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Original Date Written | Latest Date Reviewed | Date Adopted | Date for Review |
| September 2016 | October 2022 | July 2021 | October 2023 |

Marlborough St Mary's CE Primary School



MARLBOROUGH
ST MARY'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Together we believe, learn and achieve

Marlborough Mary's CE VC Primary School
Attendance Policy

Rationale

At Marlborough St Mary's we aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and all children should be at school and on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential.

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:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible

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

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. At Marlborough St. Mary's Primary School this senior leader is Mr Russell Goodman.
- 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). At Marlborough St. Mary's Primary School this person is Mrs Lisa Feeney. They may also be supported by our pastoral Lead, Mrs Kath More.

Notifying the School

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

These could include - shopping, visiting relatives, haircut, parents/carers unwell, brothers and sisters attending appointments or being unwell, unable to find school uniform, birthdays. Marlborough St. Mary's follows County Guidelines with regard to Penalty Notices for persistent unauthorised absences.

Holidays

All holiday requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher on the official form prior to the holiday being taken. If holiday is taken without an absence request form being submitted, we will ask for one to be completed on return.

Along with the Local Authority, 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. A copy of the Wiltshire Council Penalty Notices leaflet is also attached to Holiday Request forms to remind

parents/carers that they are likely to receive a fine for taking unauthorised holiday absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more in a six month period

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 absence. If the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the school office, one of the pastoral team or Mr Russell Goodman will contact the parent/carer during that school day.

The school will notify Children's Services 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 office, one of the pastoral team or Mr Russell Goodman will contact the parent/carer during that school day.

If an absence is unexplained, it will be marked as unauthorised until a reason is given. The class teacher remains responsible for the welfare of pupils in their class and will liaise closely with the PSM or Headteacher to work towards following up attendance issues.

Lengthy/Regular Absences

If a child's attendance drops below 90% with no obvious reasons, then a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of school policy. If there is no improvement and the attendance percentage falls further, then parents/carers are invited to a Student Attendance Monitoring Review (SAM). If attendance still does not improve, a referral is made to the Educational Welfare Officer who will then call further meetings if required. Lengthy/regular absences can trigger a medical review.

Lateness

Pupils are encouraged to be in school at 8.45am.

School starts 9.00am and gates are locked at this time.

Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 9am.

All children arriving after 9am must report to the office and sign in.

The registers are taken electronically and are closed at 9.30am. Children arriving between 9am and 9.30 are given a late mark. Children arriving after registers have closed are officially absent for the morning session.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Absence and lateness is continually monitored by the senior leader responsible for attendance (Mr Russell Goodman) and the Pastoral Team who will discuss problems initially

with the pupils concerned, the class teacher and parents. Where children have persistent lateness problems the parents/carers will be invited into school to a formal meeting.

- 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 attendance lead and/or the Pastoral Team
- Children with attendance between 85% and 90% will have their reasons for absence monitored
- Any child with an attendance of under 85% will have their records examined and may be drawn to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Attendance figures are regularly analysed by class, year group and whole school and are reported to the Governor's Teaching and Learning Committee.

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

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 attendance lead, PSM and the Parent Support Advisor. These include:

- Educating older pupils to get to school safely by themselves.
- Incentive schemes.
- PSM created interventions.
- EWO initiatives.
- Supporting parents with strategies to improve attendance

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

Support for children with Medical Needs and/or SEND

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered.

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.