



## Attendance Policy

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# Attendance Policy

## INTRODUCTION

At St Mary Cray Primary Academy, we have high expectations of attendance from all pupils. The school target for attendance is 97% which is above the national average for attendance in primary schools. Children need to be in school by 8.55am in order to receive a present mark in the register. If children arrive after 8.55am, they must go to the office and sign in the late book and will receive a late mark. Whole school learning begins at 8.55am and any child arriving after this time is missing out on vital learning time. Parents/carers of children who are persistently late will be required to meet with the Attendance Officer in the first instance to explore the reasons for this and to offer support. If lateness persists, parents/carers may be required to meet with the Deputy Head of School, Head of School and, if required, the Family Worker.

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued new and stricter coding for absences to which schools must abide.

*“Regular attendance is crucial to raising and maintaining high attainment. If pupils do not come to school, they cannot learn what is taught in a lesson, practise what has been taught or improve on their performance. There is a clear correlation. Pupils who attend regularly achieve more highly.”*

(OFSTED Framework Section 4.3)

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly (Education Act 1996 Section 7) with consideration of legal action against parents and carers who fail in this regard. It is the responsibility of schools to actively encourage pupil attendance and put in place robust processes to tackle unjustified absence. The Education Welfare Service will provide support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and schools in facilitating optimum pupil attendance.

## AUTHORISED & UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is the responsibility of a parent or carer to inform the school on the first day of a child's illness. All absences due to illness must be supported by medical evidence e.g. an appointment card/letter, copy of a prescription etc. For planned medical absences to be authorised, a copy of the planned appointment letter must be given to school in advance of the appointment. Any absences due to medical reasons will not be authorised without the appropriate medical evidence. Routine medical and dental appointments must, where reasonable, be taken outside of school time.

*The DfE attendance advice published in November 2013 states;*  
*“Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm”.*

To this end there will be no authorised leave given to children for holidays or travel during term time. Such leave will be marked as unauthorised and the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who has the authority to issue a fixed penalty notice. Parents/carers will also be required to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss the absence.

## LATENESS

Any child not picked up ten minutes after the end of the school day, will be included in the after school provision. The first time that this occurs will be free, however further incidents will result in a £10 payment being incurred to cover the cost of the after school club. If this is persistent and the school have a safeguarding concern, then the relative authorities will be contacted.

## **GOOD ATTENDANCE**

**Weekly attendance trophy and certificate**– Every week, classes will compete for an attendance trophy, certificate and own clothes day reward.

Winners are displayed on the school attendance board to celebrate their excellent level of school attendance.

### **Half-Termly events**

There is an attendance celebration each half-term for children with 100% attendance. Celebration rewards include magic shows, outings and fun activities e.g. interactive workshops in school/special guest.

### **Annual events**

Family events– Parents and families with children who have 100% attendance across the year will be invited to a family event for example a coffee morning or pizza night. There will be a prize draw where three families can win gift vouchers and hampers.

Children with 100% attendance for the whole year will be rewarded with a special event which will take place at the school or another venue, e.g. cinema, pizza express etc

## **ATTENDANCE REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT**

Children whose attendance falls between 90-94% are offered an Attendance Action Plan by the Attendance Officer. The process seeks to explore reasons for poor attendance and to identify ways to improve attendance e.g. Buddy group, referring to specialised services for anxiety and social issues etc. School, parents/carers and child then enter into an agreement with clear steps identified and additional support offered by the school along with commitments on behalf of parents/carers. Attendance is then monitored by the school Attendance officer for the next 6 weeks with regular feedback to parents/carers. If the attendance target has been reached at the end of this period, the parent/carer and child receive a certificate and reward. Failure to meet the target will result in a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

EWO surgeries will be held a minimum of once per term. Parents/carers whose children fall below 90% attendance whose children have not achieved their 6-week Attendance Improvement target noted above, will be invited to speak to the Deputy Head of School/Head of School and will receive advice and support on how to improve their child`s/children`s attendance. Parents/Carers of children who have had 6 days or more of unauthorised absences in the previous 6 weeks will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.