



## Attendance Policy

	Name	Date
Written By	Sheree Dargavel	January 2015
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# Attendance Policy

## Introduction and procedures

This policy follows the guidance set out in, '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)', May 2022.

At St Mary Cray Primary Academy, we have high expectations of attendance from all pupils. The school target for attendance is 96% which is 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. Children who arrive between 08:55 and 09:15 will receive an Unauthorised Late mark (L). 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 Pupil Support Lead 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 Headteacher of School, Headteacher of School and, if required, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If your child is absent from school, please call **01689 826081** before 08:55. Notification of absence must be reported **EVERY DAY** until the child returns to school.

If you do not call and report your child's absence and school are unable to get through to you, a home visit may be conducted.

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.

## Aims and objectives

Through our attendance procedures, we aim to:

- Aim for attendance of 96% as a minimum for all children
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality is recognised and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued and encourage pupils to take responsibility

St Mary Cray Primary Academy follows the framework of Expect, Monitor, Listen and understand, Facilitate Support, Formalise Support and Enforce as per Government Guidance.

## **Authorised & Unauthorised Absence**

It is the responsibility of a parent/carer to inform the school every 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 Headteacher/Teacher to discuss the absence.

## **Lateness**

Parents who do not collect their children by 3:30pm will be charged the full adhoc rate of £11.50 per child. This does not become an After School Club booking and their child/ren will not be taken to After School Club. This payment should be received in full within 24hrs of the session, children will not be able to attend clubs until outstanding balances are cleared.

If you are running late, please ensure you make alternative collection arrangements and inform the School Office by 3pm. If your child/ren continue to be collected late, this then becomes a safeguarding concern and further action will be taken following formal procedures with the relevant authorities.

## **Good Attendance**

Weekly attendance trophy and certificate - Every week, classes will compete for an attendance trophy and certificate.

Annual events - 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**

For children who fail to achieve expected levels of attendance, parents will be informed in writing. If attendance levels continue to fail, a letter will be sent requesting a meeting with the Pupil Support Lead and EWO where an Attendance Action Plan will be put in place. 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.

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 Action Plan target noted above, will be invited to speak to the Deputy Headteacher of School/Headteacher 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.

Every absence or late arrival at school means that crucial learning time is lost.

Attendance during one academic year	Number of days absence	Equivalent to number of weeks absent	Amount of hours of learning lost
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Hours
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Hours
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	150 Hours

## **Absence Request Form**

Dear Parents/Carers,

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning.

The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in "exceptional circumstances". If you consider that your request for a holiday is exceptional you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible.

If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In the case of an unauthorised holiday the Local Authority will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.

All holiday requests must be completed on the attached form; letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school at least 4 weeks before the start of the holiday.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours sincerely



Miss Coupe  
Pupil Support Lead

### **APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

If you are considering taking a holiday in term time, and that you have exceptional circumstances, please complete this form and return to the school at least 4 weeks before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name: ..... Class: .....

First day of absence:.....

Date of return to school:.....

Total number of school days missed:..... days

Reason(s) for absence

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**I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Local Authority will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay, this may result in legal action.**

Name of Parent/Carer:.....

Signed: .....

Dated .....

Please complete and return to the school office. If you are travelling abroad, please ensure flight details are provided. Thank you.

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***To be completed by head teacher:***

Authorised? Y / N

Headteacher signature:.....