



Attendance Policy

St Mary's Church of England (A) Primary School keeps children safe by ensuring and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care: all policies support the most current "Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance" and "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

Good attendance at school is important for your child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is unlikely, but it is essential that the school is informed of the reasons for absence. Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy and all absence figures have to be reported to the LA and the DfES and are recorded on a child's annual report. It is also important that your child arrives on time for school, as the start of the day establishes the learning activities for the day. Lateness is recorded in the register.

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn due to illness.

For your information the Local Authority Parents Leaflet has been included as part of our policy to ensure that parents have clarity on the penalties incurred for non-attendance.

Education Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children go to school regularly. The local authority can now issue Penalty Notices if a parent fails to make sure that their children receive the education they deserve. This policy tells you about these notices.

School Attendance and the Law

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending every day will your child have the best chance to get the most from their education.

The Headteacher at your child's school must decide whether to authorise an absence. That is to agree that there was a legitimate reason for your child not to be in school.

There are only five legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of the child
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment
- Exceptional family circumstances

The Targeted Services Division can take legal action against you if you fail to make sure that your children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court

This information is about Penalty Notices and how the local authority will issue them.

What they are

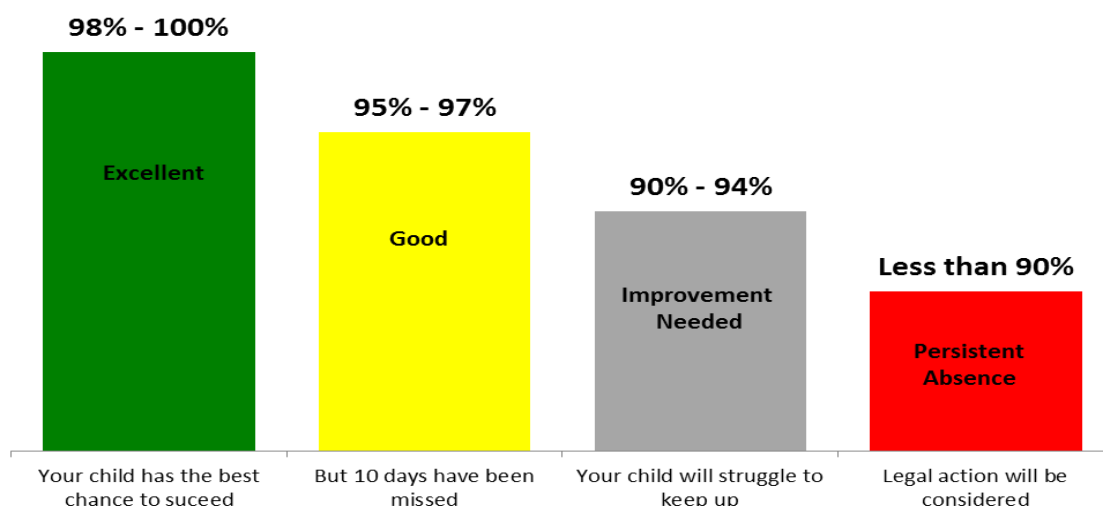
Penalty Notices are fines, issued by the Targeted Services Division, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

How they will be issued

Notices will be issued by post. They will not be issued during a Truancy Sweep or as part of a meeting with parents.

Missing School Means Missing Out



This graph shows the effect of missing time from school over a year. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind.

The Local Authority will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving.

Instead they'll monitor the case and support the pupil. If attendance doesn't improve, or if absences begin to increase the Local Authority will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

Further information

If you have concerns about your child's education you should, initially, discuss these with school.

If you would like further information about Penalty Notices, please contact the District Lead, of the Local Support Team, telephone number:- 01782 296290.

Arrival and registration

Total hours per week 32.5 hours.

The school gate opens at 8.40am, registration takes place at 8.50 am. All children should be in their classrooms at 8.45am each day.

The school day ends at 3.20pm.

Early morning activities for all age groups are set ready for children when they enter the classroom, usually spelling practise, handwriting tasks or mental maths activities etc. The register is taken twice a day: at 8.50am and at 1pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.

If a child arrives after the register has been taken he/she will be marked in as **Late**. After 8.50 am this will become an **Unauthorised Absence**. It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the school, by completing the signing in/out book in the entrance area, this is used in the case of fire, as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

Legitimate reasons for absence

Illness and medical appointments:

Every effort should be made to arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.

School procedure for unexplained absence

In line with our Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, if a child has not been reported as absent by a parent or guardian by 10am of the day of absence a phone call home will be made. If there is no reply, a further 2 phone calls will be made by S Goodwin or C Hill during that morning. By 12 noon if no reply, alternative contact will be made (email, text). If contact is not made with the school by the parent or carer by the end of the first day, the Headteacher will visit the home address accompanied by a second member of staff. If contact with parent, child or carer cannot be made local police team 101 will be informed.

Religious observance:

If you are planning to take your child out of school for religious observance we ask that you inform the school at least a week prior to the religious event.

Family bereavement:

The school will work closely with and be sympathetic to the needs of the family.

Leave of absence:

Leave of absence is an exceptional case leave from school, authorised, by the Headteacher. Which is granted for exceptional family circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

With effect from 1st September 2013, amendments to the 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave which previously had been granted at the Headteacher's discretion, in conjunction with the Chair of Governors. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The following instances may be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' when requests for holidays in term-time are received:

1. It is of significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
2. A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday
3. There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that absence leave might help the child concerned better deal with the situation
4. Leave can only be taken during the requested time due to serious medical/physical needs determined by external factors (respite/treatment plans)

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will determine if the leave of absence request meets any of the criteria outlined above and the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Process for requesting holiday absence:

If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is being requested, each application will be judged on its own merit. Parents will need to write to the Headteacher, outlining the date of the proposed leave of absence and detailing why the application is being made.

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in court action and fine. The Local Authority may also decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and / or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken in term-time:

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Shopping trips, birthday trips and holidays at home will not be authorised.

Keeping parents informed

In addition to a progress report the school will send out an end of term record of attendance so parents can be kept fully aware of attendance percentages.

A colour-coded system supports the attendance information to further illustrate the impact on absence.

Appendix

Colour bands – attendance

Appendix A - Attendance Colour Codes

98% - 100%

WELL DONE THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than 1 week in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

95% - 97%

GOOD

If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the whole year

90% - 94%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

If you are in the grey group you could be missing up to 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Less than 90%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 4 weeks of learning in the school year.