St Mary's CE Academy

Attendance and Absence Policy

Investing in the uniqueness of each individual

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"
Psalms 139 v 14

Adopted by Academy Council: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

Responsible Officer: Mrs T Ferris

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Definitions
4. Attendance expectations
5. Absence procedures
6. Attendance register
7. Authorising parental absence requests
8. SEND- and health-related absence
9. Leave during lunch times
10. Truancy
11. Missing children
12. Attendance intervention
13. Working with parents or carers to improve attendance
14. Persistent Absence (PA)
15. Legal intervention
16. Monitoring and analysing absence
17. Training of staff
18. Deletion of names from the admission register
19. Monitoring and review

Appendices

- Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Trust Vision Statement:

"Every child matters and no child is ever left behind"

Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.
Luke +

At the DNDLT we believe everyone in our Trust is a child of God, adults and children alike. Every individual and every school matters, all are valued and celebrated, and no one should be left behind. As a Diocesan Trust of the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham we are here to serve children, and schools of all faiths and none. We welcome both Church of England and Community Schools to join us to serve our communities in the North East of England as part of our Trust family whilst remaining unique and distinct within their local context.

The Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust is a place where we strive for the best outcomes for our children and staff. We work hard to achieve equity and flourishing for everyone. We want our staff and children to feel valued and celebrated given the opportunity to innovate and reach their full potential. We want our schools to be at the heart of their communities serving them in the way they know best, knowing they will be supported, encouraged and affirmed by a dedicated and specialist team.

Statement of Intent

We believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

The school understands that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, the school will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

At St Mary's CE Primary School, we take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognises the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, pastoral support and wellbeing, support for young carers and children with a social worker, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with the LA and other relevant partners to understand and remove barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents understand their legal responsibility to make sure their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, and that, where their child is registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.

- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is Tasmin Ferris, Head of School, who has overall responsibility for attendance. The Office Manager provides day-to-day administrative support for attendance processes and is the first point of contact for routine attendance matters.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Records Management Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The academy council will have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, including recent and historic trends, benchmarking against appropriate comparator schools and local, regional and national data, and paying particular attention to pupil cohorts that face greater barriers to attendance.
- Working with the DNDLT central team and Trust board as needed to support in sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across DNDLT schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

The Head of School will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the Academy Council
- Acting as, or appointing, the school's Senior Attendance Champion, with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Issuing penalty notices where appropriate, in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Providing the LA, at the frequency agreed with the LA and no less frequently than once per calendar month, with the names and addresses of pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent continuously for ten school days where their absence has been recorded using one or more of codes G, N, O and/or U.
- Providing the LA with a sickness return for any pupil of compulsory school age who is recorded with code I where there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively during the school year because of sickness.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Working with parents of pupils with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where pupils with SEND face barriers within school.
- Ensuring that a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, where applicable, is informed of any unexplained absence.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Senior Attendance Champion will be responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing, implementing and maintaining effective systems and procedures for promoting attendance and reducing absence.

- Monitoring attendance on a day-to-day basis and ensuring attendance records are accurate and attendance codes are used correctly.

- Contacting and working with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to regular attendance.

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data to identify patterns, priorities and pupils or cohorts requiring additional support.

- Working with pupils, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant partners to improve attendance and secure appropriate support where needed.

- Leading and coordinating interventions for persistent, severe or otherwise concerning absence.

- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of attendance strategies, processes and interventions, and using this information to inform future practice.

- Working closely with the Office Manager to ensure attendance records are maintained accurately, first-day response procedures are completed, and attendance concerns are identified promptly.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Engaging in any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.

- Updating the school if their details change.

- The attendance of their children at school.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.

- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.

- Notifying the school on the first day of an unexpected absence, providing the reason for the absence and advising when their child is expected to return.

- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.

- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Not being present at school for a session where the pupil is required to attend and the absence is recorded using an appropriate absence code.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.

Authorised absence

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence (including but not limited to):

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of school sessions for any reason, equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Severe absence

- Missing 50 percent or more of school sessions for any reason.

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 09:00 and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 08:55. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:45, which will last until 11:00 and a lunch break at 12:15, which will last until 13:00 – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 09:00. Pupils will receive a late mark if they were absent when the register started being taken but arrive before the register is closed. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

- The morning register will close at 09:05. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

- The afternoon register will be marked by 13:00. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time but arrive before the register is closed

- The afternoon register will close at 13:05. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Parents/ carers and where appropriate pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

The school will actively discourage late arrival, seek explanations from parents for lateness and monitor patterns of late arrival to identify where further support or intervention may be needed.

5. Absence procedures

Parents or carers will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **14 sessions / 7 school days** in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents or carers to speak to the attendance lead. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation. The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for both the strategic oversight and day-to-day coordination of attendance, including supporting agreed actions and leading escalation where required.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority of all pupils who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of 10 school days where this absence has not been authorised. The school will provide the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days, where their absence has been recorded using one or more of the unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O, and/or U), as defined in national attendance guidance. The school will agree the frequency of these attendance returns with the LA, ensuring that they are submitted no less frequently than once per calendar month. If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, a formal meeting will be arranged between the attendance lead and the pupil's parent or carer.

Where a pupil does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school will work jointly with the LA to carry out reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the pupil's whereabouts. In conducting these enquiries, the school and it's LA will liaise with the Home LA. If, following these enquiries, the pupil's name is lawfully removed from the school's admission register, the relevant LA will consider whether the pupil should be identified as a child missing education.

It is important for parents and carers to be aware that any parent/carer who has parental responsibility for a child or who lives with and cares for the child (e.g. a step parent) could be subject to enforcement action (penalty notice or prosecution) where the child is absent from school without permission.

The school will provide the LA with a sickness return for any pupil of compulsory school age who is recorded with code I where the school has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness. Only one sickness return will be required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

Where the school is unable to establish the reason for a pupil's absence and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will take appropriate action in line with its safeguarding procedures. The school will recognise that unexplained or prolonged absence from education can be a safeguarding warning sign.

6. Attendance register

The school uses **Arbor** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils.

The register will record the appropriate national attendance or absence code for every pupil, reflecting whether they are attending the school, attending an approved educational activity or other permitted provision, absent, or unable to attend in accordance with the circumstances set out in the relevant regulations.

The school will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

1. # = planned whole-school closure
2. / = Present in the morning
3. \ = Present in the afternoon
4. L = Late arrival before the register has closed
5. C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
6. S = Study leave
7. C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
8. C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
9. E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
10. J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
11. I = Illness
12. M = Medical or dental appointments
13. K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
14. R = Religious observance

15. B = Off-site education activity
16. G = Unauthorised holiday
17. O = Unauthorised absence
18. U = Arrived after registration closed
19. N = Reason for absence not yet established; where the reason cannot be established within five school days, the school will amend the entry to Code O.
20. X = Not required to be in school
21. T = Traveller absence
22. Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements, in accordance with the circumstances set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
23. V = Educational visit or trip
24. P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
25. D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
26. Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
27. Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
28. Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
29. Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
30. Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
31. Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
32. Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
33. Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the DfE will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are not physically attending school but are receiving remote education will continue to be recorded as absent using the appropriate absence code. Remote education will only be used in

accordance with the DfE's guidance, including as a last resort where appropriate and as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil into school.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person who made the amendment. The attendance register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence could not be established when the register was taken and it subsequently becomes necessary to correct the entry.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for six years from the date the data was entered.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents or carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Head of School – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Head of School, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Head of School's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents or carers and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Head of School **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the Head of School will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is **not likely** to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays. Schools are no longer able to record an absence as '*authorised holiday*' and DfE guidance states: -

"*Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance". (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024)*

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

When considering a request, the school may take relevant factors into account, including the timing and duration of the proposed absence and the pupil's individual attendance circumstances; however, each application will be considered on its individual merits.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents or carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents or carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents or carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will have the discretion to grant leave of absence during school hours for pupils to undertake employment, whether paid or unpaid, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

While not required to follow Regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school will nonetheless record such absences using the appropriate code, where a pupil is participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad under a valid licence or exemption.

This code will be recorded as an authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Religious observance

Parents or carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance as far as possible and at least **two weeks** in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

Where the relevant religious body sets apart only one day for a religious observance, only that day will be recorded using Code R. Any additional absence requested will be considered separately as a request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parents travelling for occupational purposes

Where a pupil is a mobile child and their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business, the parent will be expected to notify the school of the absence as far in advance as possible. Code T will only be used where the pupil has no fixed abode, and the parent is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. Occasional or short-term travel will not normally meet the requirements of this code.

The school will not routinely require evidence that a parent is travelling for occupational purposes; however, evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason given for the absence.

Where a parent is travelling for occupational purposes in England, the school will support continuity of education and, where appropriate, the pupil will be expected to attend a school in the area where the parent is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

9. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health conditions, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. The school will maintain the same high ambition for their attendance as for all other pupils, while providing additional support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL, and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil of compulsory school age will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, and work with the LA to support continuity of education.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

1. Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
2. Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
3. Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
4. Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
5. Using an internal or external specialist.

6. Using a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, with parental agreement, regular review dates, a clear proposed end date and the aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour.

7. Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

8. Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.

9. Temporary late starts or early finishes.

10. Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.

11. Small group work or on-to-one lessons.

12. Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Where a pupil subject to a part-time timetable has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the arrangement with the LA so that the pupil's support package can be reviewed as appropriate. Where the pupil has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved in the process.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence to support illness-related absence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where a pupil has prolonged or repeated illness and further information would help the school understand their needs, identify appropriate support or reasonable adjustments, or accurately record the absence. The school will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will consider other appropriate evidence provided by parents.

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure that attendance data for pupils with SEND and/or long-term physical or mental health conditions is regularly monitored so that emerging patterns are identified and additional support from the LA or other partners can be accessed where necessary.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Head of School – it is at the Head of School's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Head of School. The Head of School will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The Head of School reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the Head of School will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes of** the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

Pupils must return in sufficient time to attend the afternoon session and be present when the afternoon attendance register is taken. Where a pupil does not return in time, their attendance will be recorded using the appropriate national attendance or absence code.

Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

The Head of School reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Head of School's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents or carers will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents or carers will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Head of School.

Permission will be updated on a **termly** basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered to have occurred where a pupil is absent from school, or from part of the school day, without permission and without a legitimate reason for the absence having been established.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to learn by the published start time of the morning and afternoon sessions. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken where there are concerns that a pupil may be truanting. The Senior Attendance Champion or other designated member of staff will contact the pupil's parent to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the pupil's safety. Where concerns persist or the absence forms part of a wider pattern, the matter will be escalated to the Senior Attendance Champion.

Where truancy or other unauthorised absence forms part of a wider attendance concern, the school will work with the pupil and their parents to understand and address any barriers to attendance. Where support is appropriate, it will be offered before legal intervention is considered.

Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, or where support is not appropriate, the school will work with the LA to consider formal support or legal intervention. This may include a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or another appropriate attendance legal intervention, in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within a three-year rolling period will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within that three-year period, and alternative action will be considered instead.

Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but has not been successful or engaged with, the school or LA will usually consider issuing a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice. The improvement period will normally be between three and six weeks and will set out the attendance improvement expected and the support available.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. **Absent pupils**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the Head of School immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Head of School
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the pupil has an allocated social worker and/or youth offending team worker, is a looked-after child, or has any other identified vulnerability that may increase safeguarding concerns, the appropriate professionals will be informed without delay, where relevant.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

Following the incident, the Head of School will consider the circumstances that led to the pupil leaving or becoming absent from the school premises and will ensure that any necessary support, safeguarding action or behavioural response is put in place. Where appropriate, sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Head of School will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

The school will ensure that any necessary attendance records are reviewed and amended, where appropriate, to provide an accurate record of the pupil's attendance and absence during the relevant session.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing and improving attendance, the Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the SLT, will:

1. Ensure appropriate interventions and support are available to address barriers to attendance.

2. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and interventions, adapting them where necessary.

3. Ensure that pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents are supported to understand and address barriers to attendance.

4. Where absence intensifies, ensure that support is increased and that the school works with the LA and other relevant partners where appropriate.

5. Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, oversee the school's work with the LA to formalise support or consider appropriate legal intervention.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to identify individual pupils and cohorts where patterns of absence are emerging and develop appropriate strategies to improve attendance. Interventions will take account of the particular needs and barriers of the pupils and families they are designed to support.

The Office Manager may make initial contact with parents/carers regarding attendance concerns. Where concerns persist or additional support is required, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with the family to identify barriers and agree appropriate support and intervention.

Where attendance rewards are used, the school will ensure they are applied sensitively and without discrimination and may recognise good attendance, punctuality and improvements in attendance.

Any attendance reward scheme will take account of individual circumstances and will be designed so that pupils who face additional barriers to attendance, including pupils with SEND, disabilities, health conditions or other significant circumstances, are not unfairly disadvantaged. Where appropriate, improvements in attendance or individual attendance goals may be recognised.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand

what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Head of School in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes a concern, the Senior Attendance Champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand and address any barriers to regular attendance. Where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, or where engagement with support is limited, the Senior Attendance Champion may lead more formal discussions with the family and involve the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team where appropriate. The school will always consider the sensitivity of the reasons for absence and will seek to work in partnership with families, offering support and intervention before considering any punitive measures.

Where barriers to attendance are related to the pupil's experience in school, such as bullying or unmet needs, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with relevant school staff, including the DSL and SENCO, to address these concerns and put appropriate support or reasonable adjustments in place. Where barriers are outside the school's control, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with the pupil, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to help the family access suitable support. This may include referrals to external services, early help provision or whole-family support.

Any agreed attendance support, actions or interventions will be regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents to assess their effectiveness and will be adapted where necessary to reflect the pupil's and family's circumstances.

14. Persistent absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10 percent or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50 percent or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence will remain central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Pupils with a social worker, including children in need and pupils subject to child protection plans.
- LAC.
- Young carers.
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM.

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils with physical or mental health conditions.
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination.
- Pupils from groups or backgrounds that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Regularly reviewing progress and the impact of support with the pupil and their parents
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will give particular priority to pupils who are severely absent, meaning they miss 50 percent or more of school. These pupils will be treated as a top priority for attendance support, and the school will work jointly with the LA and other relevant partners to identify and address the barriers to attendance and coordinate any intensive or whole-family support required.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where all appropriate avenues of support have been facilitated and any necessary educational support or provision has been put in place, but severe unauthorised absence continues, the school will recognise that this may constitute neglect. Any safeguarding concerns will be escalated in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, including referral to children's social care where appropriate.

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure that patterns of persistent and severe absence are a regular focus of the school's attendance monitoring so that individual pupils and cohorts requiring targeted support are identified as early as possible.

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will provide appropriate support to improve attendance wherever possible. Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, or where support is not appropriate in the circumstances, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with the LA to consider whether formal support or legal intervention is appropriate. Attendance legal intervention will only be used in relation

to pupils of compulsory school age and will be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis. In particular, the Senior Attendance Champion will consider:

1. Whether support is appropriate in the individual case and, where it is appropriate, whether sufficient support has been provided and has been successful or engaged with. Where support is not appropriate, e.g. in the case of an unauthorised term-time holiday, whether a penalty notice is appropriate in accordance with the National Framework and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.

2. Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour, or if further support or other legal intervention is more appropriate.

3. Whether issuing a penalty notice in this case is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, such as if the pupil has a disability.

4. Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.

5. Working with the LA to consider putting an attendance contract or an Education Supervision Order in place.

6. Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but has not been successful or engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually be issued as a final opportunity for the parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve may not be used where support is not appropriate or where it is considered unlikely to have a behavioural impact. Any Notice to Improve will be issued in accordance with the LA's Local Code of Conduct and will normally provide an improvement period of between three and six weeks.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Where a penalty notice is considered appropriate, it may be issued by the Head of School, a deputy authorised by the Head of School, an LA officer or the police. Any penalty notice will be issued in accordance with the LA's Local Code of Conduct and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Where a second fine is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge would be £160 to be paid within 28 days. If a fine is not paid the parent would be prosecuted. The fines are per parent per child so this would mean that each parent/carer would receive a separate fine for each child. For example, a family with two parents and two children would receive a total first fine of £320 and a total second fine of £640.

Under the National Framework only 2 fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period. It is important to be aware that as a third fine **cannot** be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years (of the date of the first fine) then prosecution or other legal action, such as a parenting order, would be considered.

Where all other appropriate voluntary and formal support or legal interventions have failed, or where they have been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances, the school will work with the LA where prosecution is being considered as a last resort. Only the LA may prosecute parents for school attendance offences.

Where a parent is prosecuted for failing to secure their child's regular attendance, the penalties available to the court will depend on the offence. These may include a fine of up to £1,000 under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or a fine of up to £2,500, a community order and/or imprisonment for up to three months under section 444(1A).

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where voluntary support, including any appropriate early help and attendance contract, has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) may be considered as an alternative form of legal intervention without criminal prosecution. The school and LA will consider whether voluntary support has been exhausted and whether an ESO would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. The LA will fully consider the use of an ESO before progressing to prosecution.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the LA will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

1. Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
2. Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
3. Requiring the parents to access support services.
4. Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
5. Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Where a parent persistently fails to comply with directions given under an ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and the LA may prosecute. On conviction, the parent may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000. Persistent non-compliance will also be considered with children's social care to determine whether further action is required to secure the pupil's welfare.

Once an ESO is secured, the LA will appoint an appropriate lead practitioner to act as supervisor. The school will work in partnership with the supervisor and provide support where appropriate.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure that attendance and absence data is regularly monitored and analysed so that emerging patterns of poor attendance are identified and appropriate support or intervention is provided as early as possible.

Weekly attendance patterns and trends will be monitored at individual pupil, cohort and year-group level, including punctuality, to identify early indicators of poor attendance and enable timely support.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

1. The school cohort as a whole.
2. Individual year groups.

3. Individual pupils.

4. Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.

5. Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, LAC, young carers, pupils with long-term health conditions and pupils eligible for FSM.

6. Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure that thorough analysis of attendance data is conducted on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic and emerging trends in attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion will provide regular attendance information and reports to relevant staff to support the tracking of individual pupils and the consistent implementation of attendance procedures. They will also monitor and evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and interventions, using this information to inform, refine and strengthen future practice.

The academy council will regularly review attendance data, including recent and historic trends and the attendance of pupil cohorts that face greater or entrenched barriers to attendance, and will support and challenge the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance improvement.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national data and, where appropriate, the performance of similar schools to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share effective practice with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

17. Training of staff

The school recognises that early identification and intervention are essential to preventing patterns of poor attendance from becoming entrenched. Staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to understand their role in improving attendance and to identify pupils who may require additional support.

The academy council will ensure that all teaching and support staff receive appropriate attendance training as part of their induction and that attendance is included in the school's continuing professional development offer. Training will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving barriers to attendance and the needs of the school community.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances

- The law and requirements relating to school attendance, including the keeping of attendance and admission registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Academy Council will ensure that the Senior Attendance Champion and any other staff with specified attendance functions receive dedicated attendance training appropriate to their role. This will include the skills required to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training required to support pupils and families to overcome commonly experienced barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that patterns of absence, including persistent or severe absence and children missing education, may be an important warning sign of safeguarding concerns, and will know how to identify, report and respond to such concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

18. Deletions of names from the admissions register

The school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register where a ground for deletion set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. Where a relevant ground for deletion is met, the pupil's name will be deleted as required by the Regulations. A pupil's name will not be removed for any other reason, as doing so could constitute off-rolling.

Where a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, their name will also be deleted from the attendance register at the same time.

Where a pupil transfers to another school, the school will delete the pupil's name from its admission register as soon as the pupil is entered on the admission register of the new school, subject to any applicable exceptions under the Regulations. The school will continue to record the pupil's attendance and absence up to the date of deletion and will transfer the appropriate pupil information through the school-to-school (S2S) system.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

1. Full name
2. Address
3. The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
4. At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
5. If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there

6. If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school

7. The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **96 percent** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Head of School. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

7. Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St Mary's CE Primary has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

- The Office Manager and Senior Attendance Champion monitor attendance on a weekly basis using Arbor, with the Office Manager supporting the operational administration of attendance and the Senior Attendance Champion maintaining strategic oversight and accountability.
- Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
- Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Senior Attendance Champion daily.
- Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established within five school days are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a pupil's attendance falls to **96 percent**, the Senior Attendance Champion speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The Senior Attendance Champion also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below **96 percent**, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the Senior Attendance Champion contacts the parents to discuss this.
- The pupil's attendance is monitored for **two weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
- After the **two-week** monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continue until attendance stabilises to **96 percent**.
- If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A **four-week** monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is no improvement after an additional **four weeks**, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.