



## Durham & Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT)

# Attendance Policy

### Vision Statement

At the heart of our vision is our commitment to ensure all of our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive academically, socially, culturally and spiritually. The drive for excellence and effectiveness in our schools is paramount, but not merely because the Government says so. The enabling of every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God is a sign and expression of the Kingdom and is at the heart of the Trust's distinctive mission.



## St Mary's CE Primary School

### Mission Statement:

Each child is recognised as a unique individual who is inspired to grow and realise their potential within an enriched Christian family underpinned by our core beliefs of: Love, Trust and Hope.

### St Mary's enable everyone to be:

- Successful learners, who enjoy learning, make excellent progress and achieve to the best of their ability.
- Confident individuals who feel safe, are happy, healthy, and enjoy a challenge (or who are resilient).
- Responsible citizens who care for one another and their environment and make positive contributions to the community and the wider world.

**Vision:** A Christian family learning and growing together. Investing in the uniqueness of each individual, which is firmly rooted and is the golden thread running through everything we do.

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## Statement of Intent

We believe that our commitment to ensuring all children and young people develop and thrive academically, socially, culturally and spiritually is inextricably linked to the promotion of excellent attendance. Children can only truly flourish in their potential as a child of God if they regularly attend school.

We aim to:

- Provide an environment where all children and young people can flourish, are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day
- Foster exceptionally positive attitudes and commitment to education in our children and young people, which is evident in excellent attendance and punctuality
- Work with our parents, carers and families to develop a supportive community where truth, trust and compassion are central in our approach to improving attendance
- Develop a welcoming and hospitable school community that seeks to embody an ethos of 'living well together'
- Embed the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation in order to remove barriers to good attendance and enable all pupils and young people to flourish
- Value the dignity and ultimate worth of each individual as being created in the image of God

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:  
  
"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –  
  
(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and  
  
(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have  
  
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. "
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## 1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Vision for Education, Church of England Education Office, 2016
- Valuing All God's Children Challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, Church of England Education Office, 2017

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The Academy Council has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of **St Marys CE Primary School**.
- Ensuring that the attendance 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 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

- 2.2. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.
- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
  - Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for 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.
- 2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
  - **“Absence”** as:
    - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
    - Not attending school for any reason.
  - An **“authorised absence”** as:
    - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
    - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
    - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
    - An absence due to a family emergency.
  - An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
    - 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 absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

#### **4. Training of staff**

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

#### **5. Pupil expectations**

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96 percent throughout the year.

#### **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 6.2. Parents are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent; this is required even if the parent has already contacted the school via phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the member of staff responsible for attendance.
- 6.6. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the member of staff responsible for attendance will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.
- 6.7. 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 child after making reasonable enquiries.

## **7. Contact information**

7.1. Parents are 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.

## **8. Attendance register**

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code 'E' 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.

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 and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

## 9. Lateness

- 9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 9.2. The school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 9.3. Registers are marked by **9:05am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.4. The register closes at **9:10am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 9.5. After lunch, registers are marked by **1.05pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.6. The register closes at **1.10pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 9.7. Pupils attending after **9:10am** will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## 10. Term-time leave

- 10.1. At **St Marys CE Primary School**, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 10.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 10.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 10.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

- 10.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 10.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during 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
- 10.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines. This will be in accordance with the relevant Local Authority Policy.

## **11. Truancy**

- 11.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 11.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 13:00, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 11.4. 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.
- 11.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 11.6. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 11.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
  - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
  - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

## **12. Religious observances**

- 12.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 12.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### **13. Appointments**

- 13.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2. In line with 'Valuing All God's Children', transgender pupils may need time off for medical appointments/to receive support from external sources. We will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate such absence requests.
- 13.3. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 13.4. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 13.5. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

### **14. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

- 14.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- 14.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.
- 14.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- 14.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
  - The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
  - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 14.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

- 14.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- 14.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- 14.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- 14.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
- For not less than six hours a week; and
  - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
  - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
  - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 14.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- 14.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 14.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 14.13. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.
- 14.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 14.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 14.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 14.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.

- 14.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- 14.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 14.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
  - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
  - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 14.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 14.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 14.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

## **15. Young carers**

- 15.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 15.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 15.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **16. Rewarding good attendance**

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Attendance Awards

## **17. Monitoring and review**

- 17.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 17.2. St Marys CE Primary School's attendance target is in line with 96%.

- 17.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
- 17.4. This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2022.
- 17.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Headteacher	Mr M Piper
Member of staff responsible for attendance	Mr M Piper
Policy Agreed by Governors	September 2021
Review Date	September 2022
Link Governor	Mrs Lewis

## Appendix 1.

### Pupil absence in schools in England: 2017 to 2018, DFE, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2017-to-2018>

Summary data	2017/18, State-funded primary	2017/18, State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools
Overall Attendance	95.8%	95.2%
Overall absence	4.2%	4.8%
Absence for 4 year olds	5.2%	
Autumn Term		4.4%
Spring Term		5.2%
Summer Term		4.9%
Unauthorised absence	1.1%	
Illness rates		2.6%
Holiday rates		0.4% Unauthorised 0.15 Authorised
Boys		4.9%
Girls		4.7%
FSM		7.6%
Non-FSM		4.3%
Year groups with the lowest overall absence rates - Year 3 and 4	4.1%	
Pupils who are known or believed to have English as their first language		4.9%
pupils where it is other than English		4.4%
Persistent Absence	8.7%	
SEND with EHCP/Statement <b>PA</b>		25.1%
FSM <b>PA</b>		23.6%

## Appendix 2

### Attendance Monitoring Procedures

**St Marys CE Primary School** 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:

1. Attendance data is sent to the **Office Manager** detailing **weekly** and **annual** attendance to date.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the **Headteacher and Office Manager**.
3. 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 **Headteacher and Office Manager**.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to **90 percent**, the **person responsible for attendance** speaks to the parents to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their child's attendance. The **person responsible for attendance** may also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 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.
7. 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 **person responsible for attendance** contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. 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 headteacher 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.
9. After the **two-week** monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Headteacher and/or the **person responsible for attendance** to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to above **90 percent**.
10. If targets are not met, the headteacher 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.